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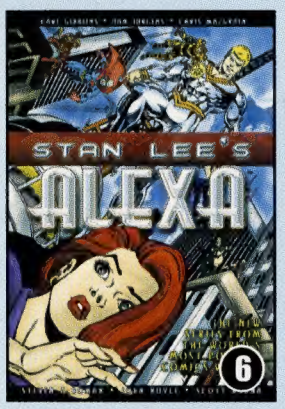
#182 MARCH 2005

Inside this issue

COVER: Judging by the trailers, this one should be massive. Guaranteeing that it will be faithful to the comic, Frank Miller shares the directing credit, alongside Robert Rodriguez and a tad of Quentin Tarantino. With a fantastic cast, great makeup and the coolest sets you could imagine, brace yourselves for an instant classic! It's subjects like this which make it worthwhile spending five hours putting a cover together! For the full story, see page 18.



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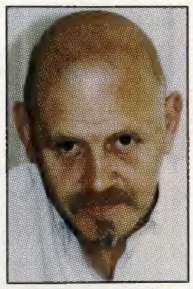
Sez Dez



Editorial
Dez Skinn

POSSIBLY more than any other comment made by this industry's working stiffs, there's one oft-heard quip which always gets my goat: "I'm writing this comic for people like me".

So, there are a lot of those then, are there? People "like you", Mr Comics Author, people who also read comics and are equally 40 to 50-something overweight reclusives who invariably care more about secret origins and comics continuity than, say, world politics.

If the answer to such is a resounding yes, it explains what's wrong with our industry because comics are being aimed at a sad freak minority of fans who are like their authors. If the answer's a no, then things are even worse because there are no people out there like these myopic writers. So who's the audience?

I know it's a lifetime ago, but I had the dubious advantage of semi-military training at IPC Magazines, then the world's largest commercial publisher. You didn't learn a great deal about creativity, thinking "outside of the box", but you did learn how to target your work at an existing – and massive – audience. Not at people like yourself.

In fact, it was so tough to come to terms with the likes and dislikes of our then audience that I suffered the best part of a year's rejects before any of my scripts were accepted. As my editor put it, "They're very good, I like them, but they wouldn't work for our audience." What he was saying was simply that I was writing for people my age, it was all I could do. My awareness was only what worked for me. But I was about 25, our audience was 7 to 12. Eventually I got it and, along with everybody else whose work was accepted, amused and thrilled a mass market of 250,000+ readers a week. Of course, it was tricky to adjust back in the evenings, so I was the worst person at parties, still cracking jokes aimed at 7 to 12 year olds.

Last Friday our nursery pick-up launched Dads Group went to Barcelona for the weekend. It was suggested by one football-mad Dad and I went along for the ride. Ninety minutes tedium out of three fun days I can suffer. But what struck me when I sat in the stadium was the attendence. I was in a sea of 75,000 people, quite a throng.

75,000 is also **Comics International's** peak readership. Actually seeing such a huge audience makes you aware of the responsibility and challenge you have in attempting to please such a large and diverse crowd.

Of course, you can always write for yourself, but there go the sales because you'll get a free copy anyway!

***Comics International** editor Dez Skinn's career in the industry spans 35 years. Titles he has created include **Doctor Who Weekly**, **House of Hammer**, **Hulk Comic**, **Starburst** and **Warrior**. Ex-editorial director of Marvel UK – where his Stan Lee-coined Sez Dez column had a monthly audience of over 500,000 – he has also edited titles including **Buster**, **Conan**, **MAD**, **Star Wars Weekly**, **2000 AD Presents**, **Rogue Trooper** and **Spider-Man** and won over 20 Eagle Awards.*
*Sadly, he's still waiting for any money from his co-created (now in production as a major motion picture) **V for Vendetta**!*

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DC unveils wave of tie-ins with Batman Begins movie

Above: The international teaser poster promoting Batman Begins. *Below: Zach Howard and Jay Leisten's art for the cover to the first 48-page issue of DC's* **Year One: Batman/Scarecrow** *two-parter.*

First Bat flick in eight years unleashes adaptation plus clutch of one-shots, miniseries and reprint collections

TIM BURTON'S 1989 *Batman* movie was not only a box office success, it also boosted the general public's interest in comics. Almost 15 years later, despite proving even more popular with cinemagoers, the *Spider-Man* movies have done little to bolster their print parent's sales.

In 1997, Joel Schumacher put the cape and cowl on George Clooney for *Batman & Robin* – the third sequel to the 1989 film – and effectively killed off the series. His mistake was to go for a 1990s riff on the camp 1960s *Batman* TV series rather than maintain the grim and gritty feel Burton had established.

Warner Bros has been trying ever since to revive its movie franchise and has taken eight years to find the right combination of script, director and actors.

American Psycho

There are a lot of hopes riding on *Batman Begins*, which opens in the US on June 17 and in the UK one week later, but the signs are looking good. Early reports indicate that *Momento* director Christopher Nolan and *Blade* writer David S. Goyer have crafted a faithfully realistic version of the Dark Knight's early years while *American Psycho*'s Christian Bale turns in an excellent performance as Bruce Wayne/Batman.

With a raft of tie-ins on the way, DC is obviously confident the film will revive public interest in comics.

On sale on June 22, is the all-but obligatory comicbook version of the movie. A 64-pager, the $6.99 **Batman Begins Movie Adaptation** is written by **Batman: Year One**'s Scott Beatty and illustrated by **Superman: Red Son**'s Killlian Plunkett and **Ghostbuster: Legion**'s Serge LaPointe. The story also appears in a 160-page trade paperback that hits shops on the same day.

The $12.99 **Batman Begins: The Movie and Other Tales of the Dark Knight** also contains four reprints, including one from 1989's **Secret Origins of the World's Greatest Super-Heroes** trade paperback.

Master of Fear

The Scarecrow plays a pivotal role in the film and DC is pushing the Master of Fear to the fore in a mini [see below] that debuts on May 25. He is also a player in Steve Englehart, Marshall Rogers and Terry Austin's previously announced six-part sequel to their classic 1970s **Detective Comics** run. **Batman: Dark Detective** premieres on May 4 alongside the 176-page **Batman: Strange Apparitions** – a $12.95 softcover that reprints their earlier collaboration – and the $4.99 **Batman Villains Secret Files 2005**, a 32-page one-shot.

Finally, two $14.99 reprint compilations also ship on May 25: the 144-page **Batman: Broken City** and **Gotham Central: Half a Life**, which runs 24 pages more.

Incredible Hulk writer back on Batman

ALTHOUGH Bruce Jones is most readily associated with Marvel, Warren or such indie companies as Eclipse and Pacific, he did write a handful of stories for DC Comics back in 1982.

Six of them were **Batman** [#345, 346 and 348-351] and he is returning to the Dark Knight for his first assignment under the two-year exclusivity agreement he recently signed with the New York-based publisher. Jones, who was most recently writing **Incredible Hulk** for Marvel, is joining forces with newcomer Sean Murphy for a prestige format two-parter, a tie-in with the forthcoming *Batman Begins* movie *[see main story above]*.

Master of Fear

Across the two 48-page issues of **Year One: Batman/Scarecrow**, Jones will take an in-depth look at the life of Jonathan Crane and the influences that prompted his fascination with fear. In a story that climaxes with Crane's first clash with Batman and Robin, the writer reveals the forces that drove the former college professor to become the serial killer known as the Scarecrow.

Often referred to as the Master of Fear, the Scarecrow debuted in 1941's **World's Finest Comics** #3. He made one further Golden Age appearance before disappearing until he was resurrected in **Batman** #189 (1987). He has since become a regular member of Batman's rogues gallery and his film role can only raise his profile further.

● As one of its *Batman Begins* tie-ins, DC is reprinting eight of the Scarecrow's appearances – including his first – in its 178-page **Batman: Scarecrow Tales**.

A $19.99 trade paperback, it ships on April 27.

*PREACHER co-creator Garth Ennis is writing a **Ghost Rider** mini. To be painted by **Venom vs Carnage** artist Clayton Crain [see art above], the Marvel Knights six-parter will feature the original Johnny Blaze version of the demonic motorbike rider rather than the later Danny Ketch incarnation. It is currently scheduled for September.*

UK indie offers 21st century pulp fiction

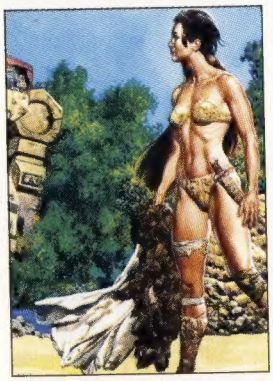
A LITTLE-known UK publisher is looking to move into the big time with an ambitious anthology title.

Set up in 2004 by Liam Sharp and his wife Christina McCormack to publish **Sharpenings**, a limited edition showcase for some of the former **Incredible Hulk** and **Spawn: The Dark Ages** artist's more personal work, Mam Tor is set to unveil **Event Horizon** at the Comics Expo being held in Bristol from May 13-15.

Mam Tor's plan is to publish its anthology as a 120-page trade paperback three times a year. Sharp, who describes the series as 21st century pulp fiction, told **CI** the project was born out of a degree of professional frustration and also from "meeting a bunch of talented artists who couldn't get work in the mainstream because their artwork was perceived as not being commercial enough."

Sharp's initial idea – a series of **Sharpenings**-like showcase specials – eventually developed into **Event Horizon**, a non-mainstream, creator-driven title that spotlighted new talent alongside established professionals.

*Above: From **Event Horizon** volume 1 – Nechromachia art by Lee Carter.*



*Above: Glenn Fabry's art for the cover to the special edition of Mam Tor's **Event Horizon** volume 1. Limited to 2,000 copies, it retails at $21.95.*

It is, the artist said, a comic where "Basically anything goes, as long as we're not getting anybody into trouble. It's a bit like if Vertigo had produced **Epic Illustrated**.

He continued, "We are filling a gap in the niche market, doing pulp fiction through imaginary space and time – starting in the dim past with the Steve Niles-scripted *Fucking Savages* and ending at Kev Crossley's village-at-the-end-of-time comedy, *The Devil's Arse*. We cover fantasy, horror and science fiction – with a smattering of humour for good measure."

As well as Crossley, Niles and Sharp, others contributing to the $19.95 first volume include Brian Holguin, Chris Weston, Ashley Wood, Kody Chamberlain, Gary Erskine and Dave Kendall.

"We kept all the stories short – three to 12 pages – so that it would be possible for the creators to produce the work in their spare time and nobody had any restrictions," explained Sharp, who said **Event Horizon** is to run only standalone stories.

Stan's Riftworld saga comes to comics

AFTER 12 years and three novels in collaboration with Bill McCay, the co-creator of the Marvel Universe is bringing one of his post-Marvel concepts to comics.

To be published by iBooks, the 48-page **Alexa** is the latest addition to the saga Stan Lee began in 1993's **Crossover**, the first of his **Riftworld** books. "Riftworld is a name I made up because it sounds good," Lee told **CI** when asked about the concept and his reasons for transferring it from prose to comics. "Also, it defines the main theme: giants coming to our world from 'a rift between dimensions'. We decided to continue the theme because, although it had originally been done as a novel, I felt it absolutely lent itself to a graphic novel, from which I have a hunch it'll spring to the big screen."

Fantasy Factory

Alexa Moran is the star of the iBooks one-shot. One of comics' top creators, she is the artist on **The Vixens**, which is published by The Fantasy Factory, America's number one comicbook company. Although she does not know how she did it, she is also responsible for bringing the giants through the dimensional portal.

As for the basic story, Lee stated, "A comicbook company hits paydirt when it signs two real life, 15-foot tall superheroes to an exclusive contract. But are they really heroes? And can the lovely Alexa, the comicbook company's star artist, unravel the mystery of the giants from beyond the rift before she unwittingly helps the giants to cause the destruction of the entire human race?"

Serious prologue

According to the writer, Alexa differs from the heroes he created at Marvel in the 1960s in that he never came up with a heroine – or hero – who was a comicbook artist. "Nor one who didn't know she had a certain power and then, when she discovers she does possess one, doesn't know where it came from or what to do with it. I think Alexa will turn out to be a very complex, very interesting and very unusual heroine."

The $6.95 **Alexa** ships in March. It is, editor Steve Roman told **CI**, "broken into 'parts,' like 1960s Marvel comics, each section getting a title page that's a play on Stan-like titles – *The Power... and the Publisher! With Great Marketing...* – except for the prologue, which is a little more serious in tone."

The opening sequence is illustrated by Chris Malgrain *[see art left]* with other chapters drawn by John Royle and Malgrain or Dan Jurgens and Scott Hanna.

Dave Gibbons is contributing a set of pin ups of Fantasy Factory characters.

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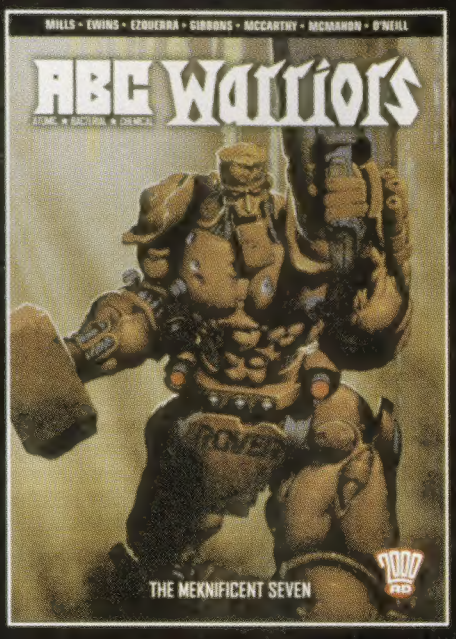

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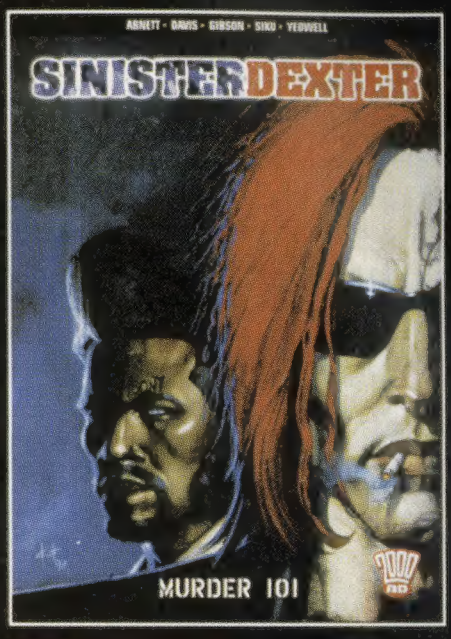

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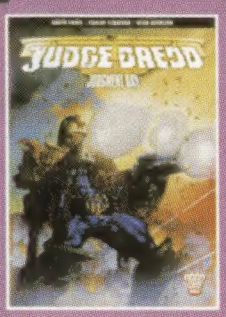

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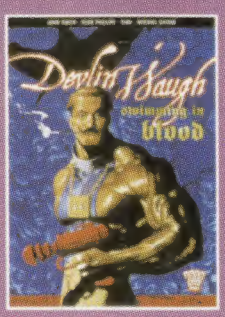

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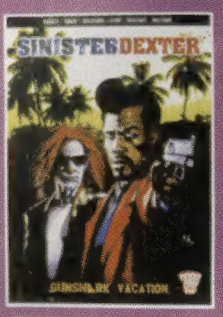

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Dracula at Top Cow

Above: Joseph Michael Linsner's art for one of four alternate covers to ***Magdalena vs Dracula****; the first episode in Image/Top Cow's* ***Monster War*** *four-parter.*

MONSTER War is a four-parter which sees Magdalena, Lara Croft, Witchblade and The Darkness battle a common foe as the Top Cow corner of the Image Universe is invaded by classic monsters.

In the first part, writers Christopher Golden and Tom Sniegoski – whose joint credits include **Angel**, **Batman: Realworlds** and **The Punisher** – pit Magdalena against Dracula. **Tomb Raider**'s Croft takes on the Wolf-Men in issue #2 of the Joyce Chen-illustrated series, while Witchblade and The Darkness tackle their own creatures in the final two episodes.

***Magdalena vs Dracula: Monster War** #1, priced $2.99, ships in April.*

SHOWN above is Gene Ha's art for the wraparound cover to ***The Forty-Niners****, a $24.99 America's Best Comics hardcover. This 112-pager is Alan Moore and Ha's long-awaited prequel to* ***Top Ten*** *[1999], the writer and artist's ABC 12-parter that is often described as* Hill Street Blues *with superheroes. Shipping on May 25, the graphic novel reveals the origins of Neopolis and introduces the superpowered police officers who first manned Precinct 10. During the book's long gestation, Moore said, "It would have an* Untouchables *vibe with superheroes thrown in for good measure. The oldest* **Top Ten** *characters would appear as youngsters and you'd get the chance to see a lot of people who've been mentioned but never seen as yet." Ha was slightly more specific, "In 1949, Neopolis is still being built by Nazi mad scientists. The main characters so far include young Jetlad and the figures in the mural from the precinct lobby."*

British superhero returns in UK comic

Feature by Kieron Mullens

CAPTAIN Britain is set to appear in a UK newsstand Marvel comic for the first time in over a decade.

Responding to reader demand, Panini UK's **The Mighty World of Marvel** is to showcase an eight-issue run of classic Alan Davis reprints. Issue 28, on sale in March, will feature stories that originally appeared in Marvel UK's **MWoM** (volume 2) #14-16 in 1984 and were last collected as a special in 1992. Subsequent issues will cover "at least" issues #1-10 of Captain Britain's short-lived series from 1984-5.

MWoM editor Scott Gray is enthusiastic about the character's return: "We've been paying close attention to readers' requests for guest characters (in **MWoM**), and Captain Britain has been topping the list for several months now. I'm very pleased to introduce CB to a new generation of readers with this classic storyline."

Excalibur themes

As well as developing Brian Braddock's origin and relationships with siblings Betsy and Jamie, the storyline features the return of adversaries Slaymaster, the Vixen and Mastermind. Such now-familiar characters as Meggan, Sat-yr-Nin and Gatecrasher's Technet were also established in this run, along with themes that were later explored by Alan Davis and Chris Claremont in the first series of **Excalibur**.

Originally printed in black and white, the stories were coloured and collected in a 1988 trade paperback, which has been out of print for many years. However, this is the first time the material has appeared in colour in an ongoing UK title.

The Mighty World of Marvel spearheaded the launch of Marvel UK in 1972. Showcasing a wide cross-section of the Marvel superhero universe, it ran for almost 11 years and 397 issues, undergoing a number of format and title changes in that time. **MWoM** was resurrected in 1983 but, despite featuring acclaimed US strips and original UK material, was cancelled after just 17 issues.

Since the collapse of Marvel UK in 1994, Panini UK has successfully been publishing a range of Marvel titles. **MWoM** (volume 3) was added to the roster in 2003 featuring Frank Miller and Klaus Janson's *Daredevil* and *Hulk* by Roy Thomas and Herb Trimpe alongside other classic archive material.

Gray is clear why Captain Britain qualifies as the latter: "We're talking stellar artwork by Alan Davis and top-of-the-line scripts from Mike Collins and Jamie Delano – miss it not!"

***The Mighty World of Marvel** #28, priced £2.40, goes on sale March 24.*

Above: The cover to ***Mighty World of Marvel*** *#28; art by Alan Davis and Mark Farmer.*

DC's other Man of Steel

HE HAS been around for almost 65 years but it is only since 1986 that creators have begun examining Lex Luthor's psyche.

Until then Superman's arch foe had been a mad scientist who blamed the Man of Steel for his baldness. He was re-invented as a ruthless business mogul by Marv Wolfman, who said, "My version hated Superman because Luthor used to be a god in Metropolis until Superman appeared. Lois Lane was also his fiancee, again until Superman showed up. In one moment, he lost everything that was important to him."

The spotlight has shone on Luthor several times since, most notably in James Hudnall and Eduardo Barreto's 1989 one-shot, **Lex Luthor: The Unauthorized Biography**, and in **Superman's Nemesis: Lex Luthor**, a 1999 four-parter by David Michelinie, Val Semeiks and Dennis Janke.

Now Brian Azzarello is to look at the Superman/Luthor dynamic from the latter's point of view. The **100 Bullets** writer is teaming up with **Batman/Deathblow** artist Lee Bermejo for **Lex Luthor: Man of Steel**, a five-parter that, says Azzarello, might change people's minds about Superman.

Above: Lee Bermejo's cover art for issue #2 of DC's ***Lex Luthor: Man of Steel*** *five-parter.*

"Luthor might have a point – maybe he's right. Basically, what we're doing is Superman from Luthor's perspective. **Man of Steel** is going to be quieter than what I've been doing with Jim [Lee] on **Superman**. No less powerful, though – maybe even more so. I think my personality is more attuned to Luthor than it is to Superman."

***Lex Luthor: Man of Steel** #1, priced $2.99, ships on March 2.*

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Misfits battle Devil in Night Club

USING an idea mapped out in his teens, Mike Norton is reuniting with the writer who gave him his first professional work.

Mike Baron originally hired him to illustrate **The Badger** during the 1997 Image revival of his Capital Comics/First Comics series. Norton is now collaborating with him on **The Night Club**, an Image four-parter based on a concept the artist came up with while still in high school. Describing his initial idea as "truly awful superhero crap," he told **CI** that he nevertheless passed it on to Baron, who "polished it, retooled it and made it something good".

No new frontier

Discussing the miniseries, which he refers to as horror-adventure, Norton – who includes **G.I. Joe** and **Queen and Country** among his comicbook credits – said, "The concept of the book basically is four misfits brought together to stop the end of the world. Now as premises go, it's definitely not a new frontier, but I'm describing it in quite broad strokes here.

"It features a teenage runaway who can see the future, a down on his luck drummer, a mechanic who talks to machines and a wily southern preacher. They all congregate together in a bar to prepare for the arrival of the devil and his minions on Earth," added Norton, a sample of whose first issue interior art is shown above.

For his part, Baron told **CI** he sees the story not so much in terms of high concept but more as an intriguing premise. "Evil fascinates. Since the dawn of time man has sought to give evil a name and a face, as if by understanding it, we could somehow negate it. I'm using concepts that are basic to all the world's religions – that a Supreme Being must necessarily have his opposite – a king of the underworld. Suppose this creature walked among us, orchestrating his final victory?"

Baron says that the series takes place in a Boston that is part real, part imaginary where a club that used to be known as The Cave Club is one of the oldest continuously operating taverns in North America. "The 'Cave' part burned out and only the 'Club' remains. It's the only haven late at night as the devil's minions crawl from the woodwork to pave the way for his triumphant return."

Ultimate battle

The writer continued, "Jack and Annie, two runaways who met at the train station, are drawn to one another, find themselves under attack and seek refuge in the Club. Annie has limited precognitive ability. It scares her. Walter the preacher is the only member of the group who knows what's coming. He read it in **The Bible** – *Revelations*.

"This is Walter's interpretation but he could be right. Jerry's a bitter loner, unable to work since his industrial accident. Against his will he's drawn into the struggle but will find meaning in the ultimate battle," Baron concluded.

The Night Club #1, priced $2.95, ships on April 13.

Wolfman to chronicle history of Israel

"I'M AN idiot," was writer Marv Wolfman's honest response when CI asked him why he had taken on the daunting task of trying to cram centuries of real history into a 96-page graphic novel.

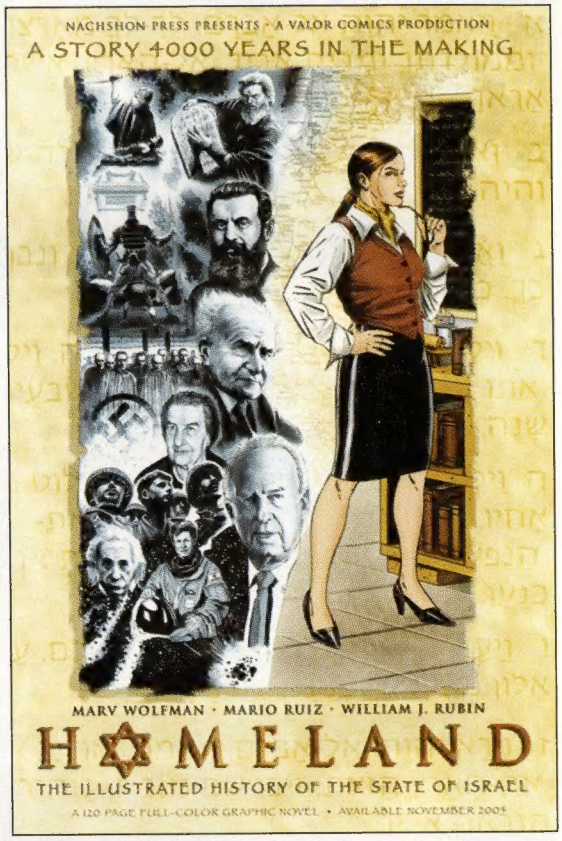
The **Tomb of Dracula** and **New Teen Titans** scripter is currently writing **Homeland**, which is to be co-published in November by Valor Comics and Nachshon Press, an imprint of the Community Foundation for Jewish Education of Metropolitan Chicago [CFJE]. Subtitled **The Illustrated History of the State of Israel**, it is being drawn by Valor's Mario Ruiz *[see below]*.

No whitewash

As Wolfman explained, the project is the brainchild of the CFJE's executive director, William J. Rubin, who was inspired by **The History of the DC Universe**, the 1986 mini in which Wolfman and artist George Pérez chronicled the DCU's history as it had been rewritten by their 1985 12-parter, **Crisis on Infinite Earths**.

"He loved the presentation – the **Time-Life** history approach – and wanted to use the same technique. An overview," claimed the writer, an avowed lover of history who says the 120-page **Homeland** is the hardest thing he has ever done.

Since the news broke, the project has been quickly criticised as propaganda although, as Wolfman observed, all history is propaganda from one side or the other.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*Above: Promo poster for Valor/Nachshon Press's **Homeland: The Illustrated History of the State of Israel**; art by Mario Ruiz.*

"Immediately a whole bunch of people – who know nothing whatsoever about the book – jumped up saying, 'They'll never include anything adverse like the bombing of the King David Hotel.' But they are wrong. We're trying to do it as straight as possible and the outline includes a lot of the negatives.

"I wouldn't have agreed to write it otherwise," he concluded.

*Above: Mario Ruiz promo art for **Magdalene**, the first book in Valor Comics' **Jesus Christ: Son of Man** trilogy.*

Modern take on Jesus

THE FIRST solo project from Mario Ruiz's Valor Comics is an ambitious retelling of the life of Jesus Christ set against a modern day background.

Best known for **Samson: Judge of Israel** and **Testament**, the artist set up Valor after quitting Metron Press – the American Bible Society imprint he founded – over editorial differences. Joining him on **Jesus Christ: Son of Man** is Jerry A. Novick, who wrote Metron's 72-page **Samson**.

The first book in the graphic novel trilogy is **Magdalene**. It is scheduled for early 2006.

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Vertigo revision for self-published comic

Above: Mike Huddleston's cover art for the first of Vertigo's ***Mnemovore****. The $2.99 six-parter premieres on April 13.*

BETTER known for originating new concepts or putting its own spin on DC Universe heroes, Vertigo is to present a new version of a 2003 four-parter originally written and drawn by Ray Fawkes and published by him under his Piper Snow Studio banner.

Now a six-issue series, **Mnemovore** is, says Fawkes, "a shock-mystery story, so it's one the readers ought to go into knowing as little as possible about what they're about to experience. Suffice it to say: it's about memories, unreliable and otherwise and what happens to the ones that go away."

Fawkes is not drawing the Vertigo mini. He is leaving that to Mike Huddleston, who drew **The Coffin** for Oni. He is also co-authoring the retelling of **Mnemovore** with Hans (*Swamp Thing*) Rodionoff. The screenwriter, whose *Lovecraft* screenplay became a 2004 Vertigo graphic novel by Keith Giffen, added, "the easiest way to think of this story is as a paranoid Lovecraftian thriller told through the eyes of an unreliable narrator."

Blue Devil writer plays Spell Game

APART from **Creeps**, his 2001 Image four-parter in collaboration with artist Tom Mandrake, and the occasional comic for Crusade, Dan Mishkin has been absent from the industry for the best part of a decade.

The co-creator of DC's **Blue Devil** and **Amethyst, Princess of Gemworld**, he is making a comeback at Speakeasy, where he is teaming up with a newcomer, Hawke Studios' Djief, for **Spell Game**.

The currently unscheduled series tells of John Dodge *[pictured right]*, "con artist and occasional stage magician who's quite surprised to learn that his tricks aren't... well... *tricks*. Dodge discovers that he can use real magic – magic that is steadily seeping into the world all around him, though it's unseen by most people. He quickly finds himself caught up in an age-old war between good and evil, pressured to choose one side or the other."

"The series brings together elements I've always been interested in," the writer explained. "First there's the notion of morally ambiguous characters. Heroes and villains who are pure of heart or thoroughly depraved definitely have their place – and there are both noble and awful people in **Spell Game**. But it's the story of the title's central guy who could go either way that really fascinates me.

"Then," he continued, "there's stage magic and illusions, and the intersection of the illusionist's cynical fakery and the audience's eagerness for a sense of wonder – both parties want the viewer to be fooled, but neither wants to say so out loud.

"John Dodge, the jaded con man and three-card monte dealer that I came up with, embodies all the cynicism and wonder and all the conflicting moral impulses I wanted to explore. When the emergence of real magic radically upsets his life, there's a very cool story to tell," concluded Mishkin, who says the series is set in Las Vegas, "America's capital of self-delusion."

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*Above: Phil Jimenez and Andy Lanning art for **Otherworld**, which Jimenez – writer and penciller of this Vertigo 12-parter – describes as* The Real World *meets **Lord of the Rings** meets* Tron. *"It's about a group of teen and 20-somethings from present-day Los Angeles who are kidnapped by an ancient sorceress and taken to another dimension, the Celtic Otherworld, and separated and forced to fight in a terrible border war there," explained the writer/artist whose credits include **Wonder Woman** and **The Invisibles**. Not related to Marvel's own Celtic Otherworld (Captain Britain, Black Knight, **Excalibur**) the writer explained this new series would deal with "a bunch of different topics, from religious fundamentalism to unfettered capitalism, modernity versus tradition, mythology versus rationality, sexual and ethnic diversity, war." The 40-page first issue ships on March 30, priced $2.99.*

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Flash in 'new' Crisis

ON THE 20th anniversary of his and artist George Pérez's **Crisis on Infinite Earths**, Marv Wolfman is taking a fresh look at the groundbreaking 12-parter.

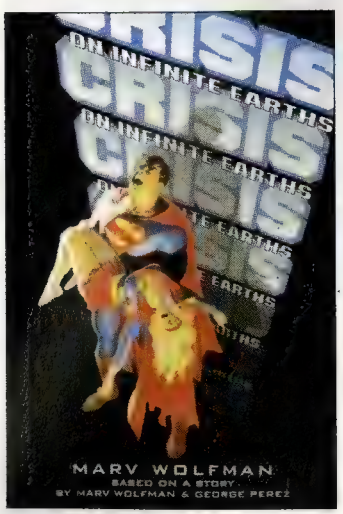
The writer is working on a novel that views the epochal events that led to all of DC's parallel worlds being coalesced into one cohesive universe from the perspective of a hero whose death was a major event in the 1985 series even though he did not play an active role in the comic.

Wolfman says the **Crisis on Infinite Earths** novel he is writing for iBooks contains at least 60% new material. He told **CI** to think of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. "You take two characters from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and move them through the story but see it from a completely different point of view. Now take the Flash, who, in the original comic, wasn't really seen – except as a dying ghost. Then, in issue #5, you see him captured by the Anti-Monitor and tortured then he escapes and dies. Essentially that's all you see happen to him.

"But, if you remember, he's popping up through time," he continued. "He has a very tiny role in the **Crisis** comic except to warn Batman and one or two others of the danger before he's killed. The novel is narrated by the Flash from beginning to end. He is pretty much dead when the book opens; he is being kept in the Speed Force, which was created subsequently [in 1995]."

Wolfman said that, upon rereading the comics, he found elements that had not been explained, "I also saw room for a very different type of story within it. So this is the story of the Flash, moving through time, assisting in certain places, making certain things different – to allow events that happened in the Crisis to actually happen.

He concluded, "And, strangely enough, it is also a romance, the Barry and Iris love story."



*Above: The cover to Marv Wolfman's 320-page **Crisis on Infinite Earths** novel; art pencilled by George Perez and painted by Alex Ross. The $22.95 iBooks hardcover is to be published on April 1.*

Crimson writer blazes trail for newcomer

Brian Augustyn charts fantasy course for real-life 16th century pirate and introduces ancient Chinese martial arts heroine for rookie publisher

KANDORA Publishing is to launch its comics line with two series written by Brian Augustyn.

The inaugural title from the New Jersey-based fledgling is **Barbarossa and the Lost Cor-sairs**, which Augustyn described to **CI** as a big action, high adventure, interdimensional thriller with pirates.

"I've long been a fan of all types of heroic fantasy adventure – and historical adventure in particular. I also have a real fondness for swashbuckling entertainment such as the Errol Flynn films and the like," added the writer. "Somehow it's now all come together for me in **Barbarossa**."

The star of the series is based on a real-life pirate – the leader of the Barbary corsairs who held sway over the Mediterranean in the 16th century – although the comic also has science fiction elements, which Augustyn was ready to justify. "As much as I love the stuff, I wanted to tell a pirate adventure that was different in some major way from what I've already seen. Plus the fact that Kandora had decided to publish fantasy based comics..."

Referring to the historical aspects of the series, the former **Crimson** writer stated, "I love to do research and I've done a bunch for this. The Barbarossa brothers – there were two, although we focus only on the younger – were real historical figures from the early to middle 16th century.

"However most of what comes down to us about them has passed through the lens of legend," he continued. "In order to make this work as an ongoing series, I've had to invent characterisation and supporting characters and I've done this by romanticising the legend even more. Now Barbarossa is a dashing, humorous rogue with a heart of gold. But I have incorporated many facts of the man's reality as well. He is a devout Muslim, so he observes the daily prayer rituals and follows the tenets of his faith. He doesn't drink, smoke or curse –and he's rather formal and courtly toward women. Several of the other cast members come from historical legend as well."

> ***"... a paradise is comfortable and safe but, without challenge and striving, a civilisation can become stagnant."***
> *Brian Augustyn, writer – **Jade Fire***

Addressing **Barbarossa**'s fantasy elements, the writer said, "We've taken the crew through some mystic portal to an entirely different world – one where oceans far dominate the planetary composition. The world is called Helios and its land masses tend to be small clusters of islands amidst the vastness of the seas. Because these island nations are so far separated from each other, there is a constant atmosphere of suspicion, distrust and political tension. Barbarossa and his crew – and Lady Julia – meet and interact with a wide range of inhabitants of the strange new realm.

"Also," Augustyn explained, "they begin to realise that like them, the people of Helios seem to be transplants from Earth, from differing eras and geographical locations. Apparently, whatever force moved the crew to Helios has been doing this for at least a millennium. The mystery of who and how will be important to our overall story."

Barbarossa and the Lost Corsairs premieres in March as a $3.50 series drawn by a Korean newcomer, the apparently speedy and reliable H S Park who is also drawing **Jade Fire** – Augustyn's second title – which launches from Kandora in April.

Evil in paradise

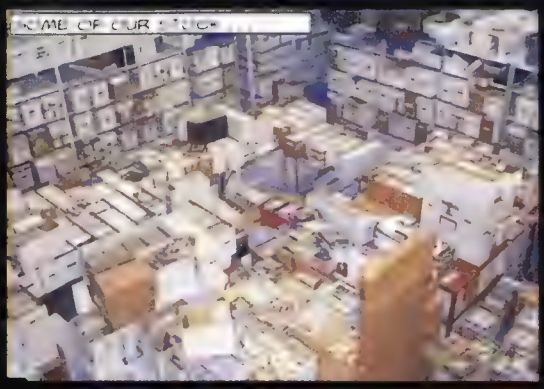
Moving on to **Jade Fire**, which he describes alliteratively as a mystical, mythical martial arts mystery, the writer said, "It's a story about innocence and corruption in a way but it's also about growing up and engaging the real world.

"The folks who have lived in blissful harmony in the walled city for generations lead idyllic lives but they don't really know what life in all its complexity is about," added Augustyn, who at one time co-wrote **Flash**. "At the same time that evil begins to infest their paradise, many of the citizens are beginning to feel the early stages of discontent; a paradise is comfortable and safe but, without challenge and striving, a civilisation can become stagnant.

"So, I guess, in a rather high-fallutin' way, I see this story as a sort of allegory about growth and maturity. Maybe my last birthday had a greater effect on me than I realised," stated Augustyn, who recently turned 50. "In a way, it's also a variant on the Garden of Eden story – the temptation of evil comes to a perfect place but, in changing everything radically, the evil also inspires change and growth for the good in response.

"Also, as a fan of martial arts films, especially the more recent epic variety – *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Hero* et al – I wanted to work in that kind of style; to create a time-lost fairytale with lots of kicks and flips," he concluded.

*KOREAN artist H S Park is making his US debut drawing both of Kandora Publishing's first two monthly titles. Pictured are his interior pages from the premiere issues of **Barbarossa and the Lost Corsairs*** [above and below] and ***Jade Fire*** [left]. *"In a way Jade Fire is a superhero – although she lives thousands of years in our past – and I love superheroes," stated series writer Brian Augustyn. "The series is also a martial arts/horror/mystery and those are fun genres too."*



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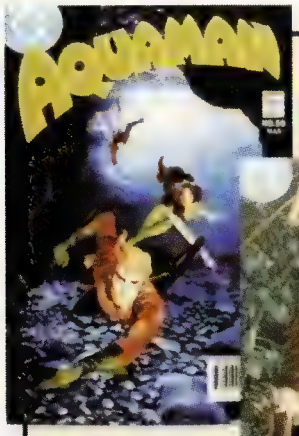

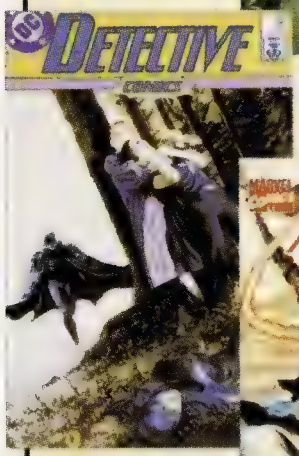

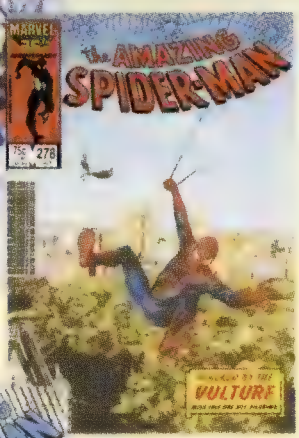

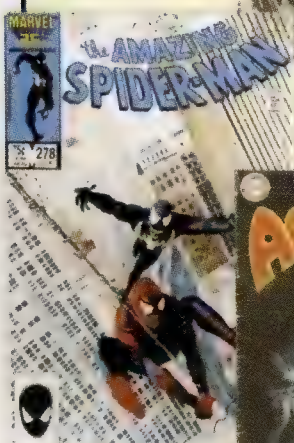

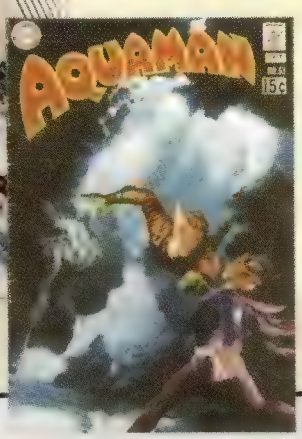

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Above: Bart Sears' art for the back cover to the first $2.99 issue of Image's black and white ***Armor X****, which ships on March 9.*

Armor X for Image

AFTER more than a decade as an inker, Keith Champagne is making his writing debut on a black and white Image series illustrated by **Drawing Dynamic Comics** author and **The First** artist Andy Smith.

Armor X is the story of a 17-year-old who acquires a suit of high-tech armour. "It was inspired by the notion of the angry teenager who gains superpowers...' only to turn around and immediately start doing good with them. That always rang a little false to me," claimed Champagne.

"I mean... if a kid was frustrated and angry and bullied and bitter towards the world – then suddenly gained vast powers, would his or her automatic reaction be to help his fellow man? I don't think so..." the writer teased.

Reality TV Hercules

HE BURST into the Marvel Universe in 1965 but Hercules has always had to live in Thor's shadow.

There have been several attempts over the years to make the Greek demigod a star in his own right but three solo miniseries and a single graphic novel across 40 years have left him as only a B-list superhero.

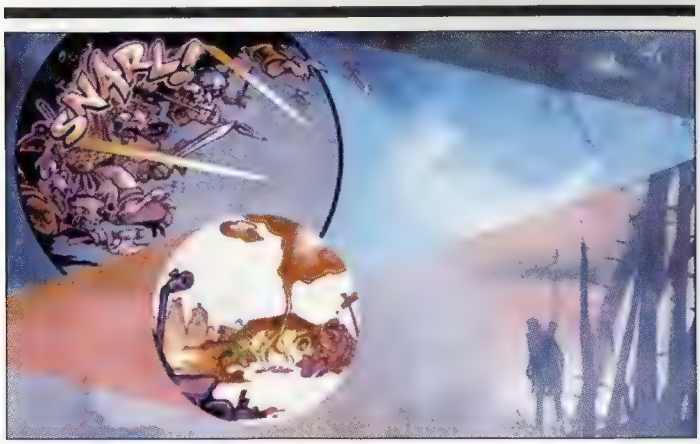
One-time **Wolverine** writer Frank Tieri is the latest to try to raise Hercules' profile but he is taking a 21st century approach. He is teaming up with former **Black Panther** artist Mark Texeira for a five-parter in which the one-time Avenger will undertake modern versions of his 12 Labours... for a reality TV show.

"We pick up soon after the events of *Avengers Disassembled* – in fact, the first time we actually see Herc is at the funeral for the Avenger casualties from that story-line – so if you want to see Hawkeye and Ant-Man, etcetera being laid to rest, this is the place," stated Tieri. "Herc's worse than ever... constantly drunk, uncontrollable, downright embarrassing – in fact, it's gotten to the point where even the Avengers want nothing to do with him.

"He's essentially become a superhero has-been. And what happens to has-beens these days? They grasp at what's become the last desperate cry for the washed up... the reality show.," added the writer, who said that, at the outset, Hercules believes he has only agreed to do some "half-assed Labours... really nothing more than fluff versions of the originals. Yeah, like that's going to happen...".

***Hercules** #1, priced $2.99, will ship on April 13.*

Above: Mark Texeira's cover art for the first issue of Marvel's ***Hercules*** *five-parter.*



ANIMATOR Ralph Bakshi is developing a comicbook anthology as a sequel to his critically panned 1977 movie, Wizards. *Shown above is promo art for* ***Wizards II****, the comic which went into production in late 2004 and "is slowly taking shape".*

£350 worth of prizes!

Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment is releasing the ultimate collector's edition set of this "ultimate face-off action movie (MTV) complete with no less than 20 bonus features.

In stores from March 7, this two-disc Limited Edition Collector's Box set is priced £34.99. The regular set is priced £24.99 and the single DVD £15.99

10 two-disc limited box DVD sets!

To enter, simply choose the correct answer to the following question:

Who published a mini-series starring Alien vs Predator in 1990?

a) DC Comics
b) Dark Horse Comics
c) Marvel Comics

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The winners will be selected and announced in Comics International #182

Please also complete the following:
My five favourite features last issue (when we were supposed to run this competition) were:

___ NEWS INTERNATIONAL
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___ V FOR VENDETTA FEATURE
___ TALKING SHOP
___ NOVEL GRAPHICS
___ FRAME TO FRAME
___ REVIEWS
___ BIFF'S ILLUMINATIONS
___ ADVANCE LISTINGS
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___ NETWORKS
___ Q&A
___ COMMENT
___ COMICS ECONOMICS
___ LETTERS/COMIC CUTS
___ EVENTS GUIDE
___ ADVERTISEMENTS
___ COMPETITION
___ DIRECTORY

PLUS... which of the above is your LEAST favourite, the one you skipped reading, the one you wish we'd replace with a new contender for the top spot:

_____

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ALIEN VERSUS PREDATOR COMPETITION
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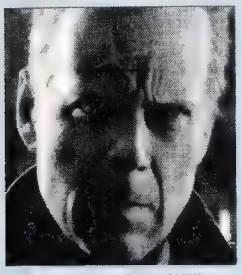
All entries must be postmarked before March 31st, 2005

Sin City mugshots

"I'm just a pasty" thinks Marv (Mickey Rourke). No Marv, you just look like one.



As hard as Marv, Bruce Willis plays the cop Hartigan in the segment *That Yellow Bastard*.

"Oi, Sam! You shold've gone to Specsavers" Elijah Wood does the silent Bob routine as Kevin, a man with some issues when it comes to his diet.

Catalogue pretty boy Nick Stahl *(Terminator 3)* gears up as That Yellow Bastard, the peckerless pedo with a heart of cold.

"Hey Goldie, wake up - Simon Groom's here" Jaime King sleeps like the dead through an invite to get her Blue Peter badge.

"It's nice to fancy Nancy" Jessica Alba shines in her role as *Sin City*'s favourite stripper.

Sin City is pure pulp friction

Frank Miller's Sin City gets the Hollywood makeover for what is set to be this year's most off-beat comics adaptation. ***CI*** *offers up an inside look at the sure-to-be hit from director Robert Rodriguez.*

Sin City feature by
Gary Eliot

THE GOOD news is that on April 1st, we are about to see the most perfect adaptation ever of a comicbook on to the movie screen.

The bad news is that if you have read any of Frank Miller's *Sin City* stories, you will know every plot, storyline, camera angle and character that awaits you at your local multiscreen.

This Easter, Frank *(Robocop 2* and *3)* Miller, Robert *(From Dusk Till Dawn, Spy Kids 1-38)* Rodriguez and Quentin *(Pulp Fiction, Kill Bill 1-2)* Tarantino bring us *Sin City*.

It's a two-hour black and white (with spot colour) flick featuring four sordid tales, ripped directly from Miller's hard-boiled film noir stories, set in a place that makes Baghdad look like an attractive holiday hotspot.

On top of all of this is it's stunningly filmed and has a cracking eclectic cast

Triple Trouble

Like a faulty Terry's Chocolate Orange, the film is broken down into three segments with a vignette. As readers who are familiar with the premise know, the sections are all linked by the fact that all of the main protagonists are all in Kadie's Bar at the same time, but spin off to tell their own tales.

Sin City - The Hard Goodbye features Mickey "real name Philip" Rourke as Marv – a brutal, scary but loveable ugly loser who gets lucky one evening with an incredible babe named Goldie (Jaime King).

He is woken up in the morning by the cops, only to discover Goldie dead at his side. This leads him on a road to vengeance to find out who did it. Along the way, he meets Kevin (Elijah Wood) and Roark (Rutger Hauer) who "help" him to understand what's really going on.

That Yellow Bastard finds veteran cop Hartigan (Bruce Willis) on his last day of work before retirement, taking on a kidnapping case involving the disappearance of a stunning stripper known as Nancy (Jessica *Fantastic Four* and "cheap CD players" Alba). Ah, but as ever, the case becomes more complex for the cop than navigating Luton's one-way system.

The Big Fat Kill has the classic "guy helps girl" routine in it, with Dwight (Clive Owen) helping out Ava "the dame who messed his life up" just that one last time.

He has to enrol the help of Sin City's loveable-but-deadly hookers to get where he needs to... but will his best laid plans ever come to fruition?

The Customer Is Always Right is the vignette featuring Josh Hartnett and Marley Shelton in a brief tale of love and betrayal.

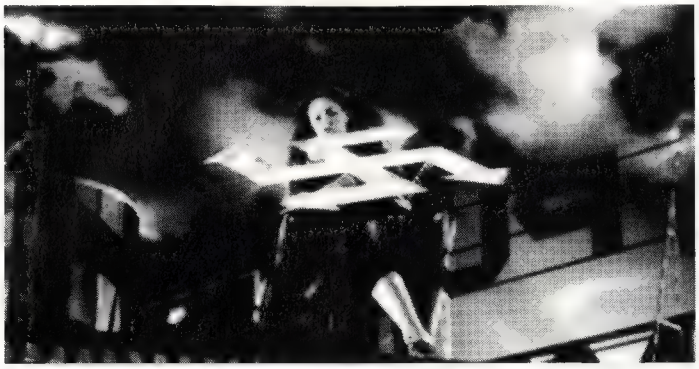
So, if you're already familiar with all you've just read, why go and see the film? Because it looks amazing, and there's nothing wrong with a revisit when the material's this good. Here come the anorak facts...

Sin City goes blue

It seems that no idea has been discounted into setting the scene for this movie. Rodriguez filmed most of the characters in front of a blue screen, a process identical to that awful tosh *Sky Captain*, but then he laid Miller's original artwork over the blank canvas to create the backgrounds. This has an amazing effect on the overall look of the film, pushing the visuals into new cinematographic areas.

When Rodriguez was given the green light to make the film, he decided "that it couldn't be a regular movie",

Top: Gail (Rosario Dawson) proves to us that hookers use the new sonic toothbrush. Above: Marv (Mickey Rourke) discusses with his parole officer Lucille (Carla Gugino) the dangers of shaving while riding a unicycle.



Above: Deadly little Miho (Devon Aoki) misunderstands the meaning of TV's Stars In Your Eyes

and because he was looking "for a challenge", he'd pull all the stops out. He filmed the vignette off his own back, dropped the backgrounds in, hunted down Miller and finally found him in a bar (now that's unusual for comic artists) then showed him the footage on a laptop.

Miller was so impressed that he gave his total committment to the project. By having both creators permanently on set, it meant that the origins of the book have not been watered down at all.The mood was apparently so infectious, that the actors were asking for scenes to be re-shot in order to gain the exact poses and movements from the comics series. Miller also was noticed hanging around with certain actors more who played his favourite creations.

> "In costume, I look like I have an S&M super-hero outfit "
> *...Rosario Dawson (Gail)*

Tarantino directs for $1

In a tradition dating back to the classic *Dead of Night*, and revived to great success in the 1970s by the likes of Amicus and Neil Simon, Rodriguez shot the anthology movie in segments. This kept the actors contracted for shorter periods and not only kept costs down, but also to helped to maintain the immediacy of each story during filming.

Rodriguez showed some rushes to his mate and fellow auteur Quentin Tarantino (a keen comics fan himself) who exclaimed, "It was the most eye-popping thing I'd ever seen".

So it comes as no surprise that Tarantino spent a day working on set directing in the most "Miller-esque" style he could. For the sum of $1.

This apparently pays back the favour of the all-rounder Rodriguez, who had scored the entire *Kill Bill Vol 2* movie for the same price. These men have to get new agents!

Miller was quoted at the end of the Tarantino day as saying "one of the most fun days I've ever had".

It can be categorically stated that this comic adaptation will be more faithful than any other, thanks to Rodriguez insisting Miller received co-director status – resigning from the Directors' Guild over their quibbles about Miller's eligibility.

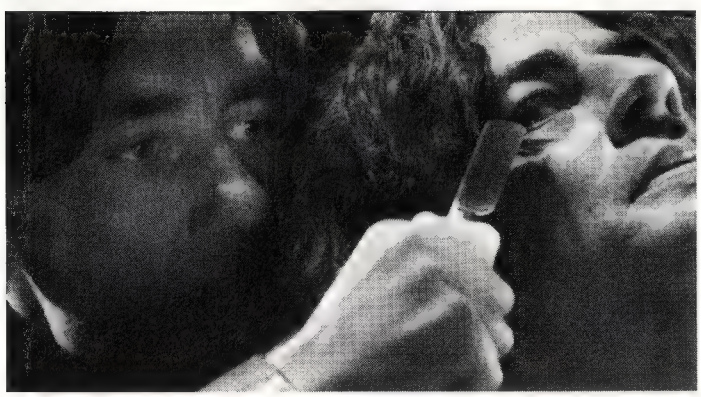
The boldness in its approach, even down to the possible loss of viewers due to its monochrome appearance doesn't seem to have stifled any creativity. They have merely used its perceived weaknessess as strengths; grey blood should get it through the censors – sorry, certifiers – easier.

The film noir genre has not been realised by the Hollywood machine for many years and *Sin City* could be a breeze of fresh air that, for better or worse, sets a trend for a spate of similar over the next few years.

Frank Miller bank filler

Frank Miller now has his tale of Spartan sacrifice, *300*, in pre-production for 2006 while Rodriguez has already talked of a sequel to *Sin City*, involving Johnny Depp and Miller has other *Sin City* tales he wants to create.

Hungry for more? Then get a taste of the film at http://www.ld 50.hu/tv/sincity_comiccon.mov. Trust us, you'll want to download it for future viewing.



Above: Dwight (Clive Owen) threatens Jackie Boy (Benicio Del Toro) who, not impressed, growls, "You've made a big mistake, pal!". See the clip for Dwight's retort.

WIN a full set of SIN CITY books!

How cool is this? Over the next four months, Titan Books, the leading UK publisher of graphic novels, is producing all of Frank Miller's **Sin City** books in a brand new design by the award-winning Chip Kidd. That's the above seven books plus the currently on sale **Art of Sin City**, a 128 page £29.99 hardcover. The lucky winner of this competition will receive all eight books as soon as they're published!

To enter,simply choose the correct answer to the following question:

Which of the following is NOT a Frank Miller creation?

a) Sim City
b) 300
c) Elektra

Name: _____
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The winners will be selected and announced in Comics International #184

Please also complete the following:
My five favourite features this issue are (please mark in order as *1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th* – no ticks):

___ NEWS INTERNATIONAL
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___ SEZ DEZ
___ SIN CITY FEATURE
___ TALKING SHOP
___ NOVEL GRAPHICS
___ FRAME TO FRAME
___ REVIEWS
___ BIFF'S ILLUMINATIONS
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All entries must be postmarked before March 31st, 2005

In Brief

W W NORTON, which is to release Will Eisner's **The Plot: The Secret Story of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion** in May, has acquired most of his graphic novel backlist from DC Comics.

The deal, struck shortly before Eisner's death, leaves the rights to **The Spirit** collections with DC. Norton is to re-release hardcover and paperback editions of the 14 graphic novels covered by the deal in hardcover and paperback over the next three years. The publisher also plans to package three of them into **The Contract with God Trilogy**, set for November.

TOPPS has acquired the North American and European rights to produce future Batman trading cards.

The first set under the new licence is to be based on the *Batman Begins* movie, which opens in the US on June 17.

MIKE Baron is writing the first new **Nexus** series since 1997's **Nightmare in Blue**.

The writer told **CI** that the story, which is subtitled **Sinick**, "deals with the worst mass murderer Nexus has ever faced. It also introduces one hell of a new character. I ain't saying who, except to point out that Sundra was pregnant when last we saw her."

The project is currently unscheduled by Dark Horse.

DC HAS removed **Metal Hurlant** #15 from its schedule.

Due to ship on January 26, the 64-page issue of the $3.95 Humanoids anthology is to be resolicited at a later date.

No reason was given for the postponement.

SEVEN years after **The X Files** comic has been discontinued, Checker Books is to begin collecting the series, picking up from where the Topps' trade paperback reprints ceased.

Checker's first 200-page **X Files** compilation ships in March, priced $19.95. It contains issues 13-19 plus 1995's issue #0 – which adapts the pilot episode – and the adaptation of *Squeeze* from the short-lived **The X Files: Season One** #1. Volume 2, which follows in the summer, reprints #20-26 as well as issue #½ and **The X Files Comics Digest** #1. Both softcovers are priced $19.95.

TONY Bedard is writing **The Deathwalker**, an unscheduled four-issue horror series for Avatar.

"It's about a woman who counsels the terminally ill and finds that there are much worse things than dying. Like working in Billy Tucci's basement," stated Marvel's **Exiles** and **Rogue** writer about his ex-employer on **Shi**.

*THE CURRENT – March – issue of **History Today** includes an article detailing the 10 greatest British political cartoons of all time as chosen by Dr Tim Benson, founder of the Political Cartoon Society. The magazine is now asking readers to vote for their own favourites and offering a David Low original as an incentive. In addition, Benson's selection – which includes the above [#8] by Zec – are being exhibited at The Political Cartoon Gallery, 32 Store Street, London WC1 throughout March. Log on to www.politicalcartoon.co.uk for further details.*

Living dead keep coming

HAVE zombies ever enjoyed such popularity in comics?

The Night of the Living Dead director George Romero has them shuffling through DC's **Toe Tags**, and they are also infesting IDW's **Containment** and Viper's **Dead @ 17** as well as Image's **The Walking Dead** and **Moonstone Monsters: Zombies**. There is also **G.R.A.V.E. Grrrls**, which is moving from Moonstone to Midnight Show before its March debut, and Image/Desperado's upcoming **Deadworld** relaunch.

*Pictured: Frank Cho art for Image's **Zombie King** one-shot.*

Zombie King is set to join that list – which is almost certainly not definitive – in April. A black and white Image one-shot, it centres on a drug that can grant immortality by mending bones, reconnecting nerves and even reanimating dead cells. But there is a price to pay and the world will end up paying it.

The comic is by Frank Cho, the *Liberty Meadows* creator who is currently producing Marvel's recently-launched **Shanna, the She-Devil** seven-parter.

***Zombie King** #0, priced $2.95, ships on April 27.*

From mainstream to innovation

ANOTHER mainstream book publisher is set to enter the graphic novel market although Roaring Brook Press is not intending to launch its innovative graphic novel line until early next year.

First Second, the Connecticut-based company's newly-formed and unusually named imprint, is targeting a broad audience with a range of titles intended to appeal to middle-graders (aged eight to 12 years), teenagers and adults.

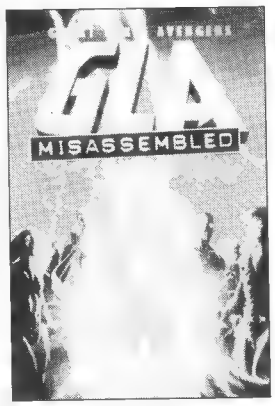
Despite the long lead time until its debut, First Second has already lined up an impressive list of writer, artist and projects.

Of the creators, best known to mainstream comics fans is Eddie Campbell, who produced last year's **Batman: The Order of the Beasts** one-shot for DC. Alan Moore's artist partner on **From Hell**, he is writing and drawing two graphic novels for First Second: **The Fate of the Artist** and **The Black Diamond Detective Agency**, an adaptation of an in-development movie.

The other major comics name is indie cartoonist Jessica Abel. She is working with Gabe Soria and Warren Pleece on **Life Sucks** – a story of teenage vampires in Los Angeles – and, with her fellow School of Visual Arts comics teacher, Matt Madden, on **Lines on Paper**, a students' manual for creating graphic novels.

Among the other announced titles are playwright, author and filmmaker Adam Rapp's futuristic **Decelerate Blue**, **The Golem's Klezmer Band** by top European creator Joann Sfar and an untitled story on the writing of the US Constitution by noted historian Catherine Clinton.

Marvel resurrects its third stringers



*Above: The cover to the first issue of Marvel's **G.L.A.** five-parter; art by Paul Pelletier.*

AFTER 16 years of ineptly battling villains in relative obscurity, the – unofficial – mid-West branch of the Avengers is finally to get its own title.

Introduced by John Byrne in 1989's **West Coast Avengers** #16, the Great Lake Avengers are led by Mr Immortal with Dinah Soar, Big Bertha, Doorman and Flatman completing the line-up. They get their big break as they try to replace the core team in the wake of *Avengers Disassembled*.

The cheekily-titled **G.L.A.** is a $2.99 four-parter written by Dan Slott and pencilled by **Negation**'s Paul Pelletier, a CrossGen refugee who worked with the writer on **She-Hulk**. It premieres on March 23.

CI #180 competition winners

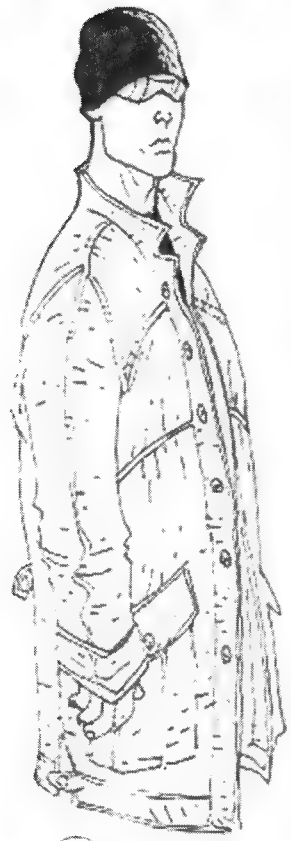
IN **CI** #180, five readers were each offered the opportunity to win copies of two new Omnibus Press graphic novels: **Godspeed: The Kurt Cobain Graphic** and **Eminem: In My Skin**. The winners were:

Stewart Brown, Baillieston, Glasgow
Anthony Dare, Roath, Cardiff
Christopher Montanarini, Sidcup, Kent
Anthony Pick, Hoylake, Wirral, Cheshire
Adrian Torson, Macclesfield, Cheshire

Reader votes scored the 10 most popular sections of the issue as:

1 News International (17.2%)
2 Competition (11.8%)
3 Reviews (11.3%)
4 Letters/Comic Cuts (9.1%)
5 Sez Dez (7.5%)
6= Networks (6.4%)
6= New Roundup (6.4%)
8 Talking Shop (5.4%)
9= Advance Listings (4.8%)
9= Biff's Illuminations (4.8%)

The highest scoring section as the least popular feature remained the regular "None, they're all fine" – this time with a whopping 46.1%. *Comics Economics* followed at 15.4%, then a tie between *Novel Graphics* and *In the Gutter*, each scoring a negative 7.6%



Human Race fulfils prophecy

***Beast Boy** writer and artist reunite to introduce new superteam into DC Universe*

LIKE many of DC's forthcoming minis, there is a shroud of secrecy surrounding **The Human Race**.

No one is willing to say how integral the seven-parter may be to the wholesale changes that are being predicted for the DC Universe in the wake of the imminent **Countdown**, a one-shot that many believe to be a prologue to a prophesied **Crisis II**. Certainly, when asked directly, series writer Ben Raab would only say, ""You'll just have to wait and see."

What the writer did reveal when speaking with **CI** about the project was "From a creative standpoint, **The Human Race** was inspired by all the science fiction and superhero team books I grew up reading as a kid. But on a more personal note, I'd have to say it was inspired by the anxiety of growing up... of becoming an adult... of having to take responsibility and be accountable for your actions. In its own twisted way, I suppose at its heart, this book is a coming of age story."

Alien invasion

The mini is about a high school senior with a troubled past who wakes up on his graduation day to discover he has been infected with an alien virus that could spell the end of the human race as we know it.

Raab went coy again when – referring to such extracts from DC's **Human Race** solicitations as "invaded by an alien force," "threat of a global mutation" and "manifests strange powers" – **CI** asked him if there was any link between his series and 1988's **Invasion!**, the Keith Giffen-driven three-parter in which the Dominators used bio-warfare to unleash humanity's meta-gene. "You'll have to read it and see..."

Secret society

Returning to **The Human Race** itself, Raab explained, "Our story centres around Ulysses Adams – the aforementioned high school student infected by the xenovirus – and his struggle to hold on to what little remains of his humanity. Aiding him are the members of the current incarnation of Delta Chi Delta."

Described by DC as a super-powered fraternity, Delta Chi Delta is charged with a mission: to protect the genetic code of the human race from any outside interference. Contradicting the solicitations, the writer stated, "Though its name is derived from the Greek letters we all recognise from science class as meaning 'change' and 'variable', Delta Chi Delta isn't a college fraternity. It's a secret society. But nothing like the Masons. Its members seek not to influence the course of human affairs but rather to ensure them.

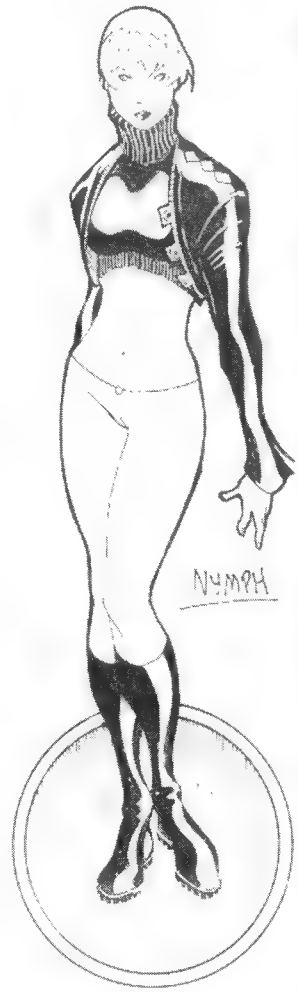
"The team includes: Delphi, the mysterious leader whose brain has been replaced with an A.I. [artificial intelligence]; Sensei, the 300-year-old samurai with the 21-year-old body; and Nymph, the impressionable empath," added the writer. "Opposing them is Dr. Damien Masters – aka Paracelsus – a mad geneticist determined to use the xenovirus to his own messianic ends."

Fighting darkness

Asked how the series fit into DC continuity, Raab responded, "Very covertly. We're playing it that our heroes have been around for a very long time, but no one knows. Not even now..."

The writer, who said a good deal of background will be covered in the first issue, revealed that the history of the Delta Chi Delta fraternity goes back hundreds of years. "The basic back story is that in the 4th century, the last Oracle at Delphi had a vision of the future... A future that has turned out to be the DCU of today. But she also saw darkness on the horizon for the human race. So she founded Delta Chi Delta to fight that darkness and protect the future for all humankind."

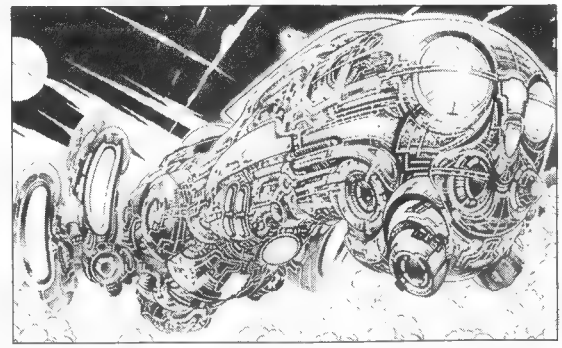
Raab had a simple answer to the question of how Delta Chi Delta's role has remained covert down the centuries. "Because that's been their job for so long. Since its foundation, the members of Delta Chi Delta have been the 'heroes behind the heroes' protecting the future of human evolution in ways that not even the JLA would know..."



The story begins in Shuster's Glen, a suburb of Metropolis, but spans the globe over the course of the seven issues stated Raab, who said it is the escapism of this type of material that interests him. "It may seem silly but when you stop and look at the median age of our audience these days, it's no surprise that despite having 'grown up', we're all still looking for the escape that comics provide. Whether it be superheroes or science fiction or fantasy or whatever floats your boat..."

The Human Race, which the writer describes as "A good ol' sci-fi/super hero adventure story with a lot of action, drama, suspense and heart," is drawn by Justiniano, the former Chaos! Comics regular who worked with Raab on 2002's **Beast Boy** four-parter.

***The Human Race** #1, priced $2.99, ships on March 16.*



*Pictured: **The Human Race** art by Justiniano – A space craft* [above] *and character studies of Nymph* [top], *Ulysses – star of the DC series* [top and centre left] *and Delphi* [bottom left].

In Brief

IN a 96-page DC hardcover, the Man of Steel and Lois Lane are to be transported to a city where futuristic technology and magic both coexist .

Written by **Aliens vs Predator: The Thrill of the Hunt**'s Mike Kennedy and drawn by **Superman/Tarzan: Sons of the Jungle**'s Carlos Meglia, **Superman: Infinite City** ships on June 22, priced $24.99.

THE CREATORS responsible for DC's **Formerly Known as the Justice League** are to revive Marvel's non-team.

Writers Keith Giffen and J M DeMatteis and penciller Kevin Maguire's **Defenders** four-parter is as-yet unscheduled.

"Marvel is being as free with us as DC ever was," stated Giffen. "Probably even more so, because one of the problems over at DC was that a lot of the major characters in **Justice League** were pulled out because they thought we would ruin them. Ever wonder why Wonder Woman disappeared from **Justice League** so fast? But at Marvel they gave us Doctor Strange, the Hulk, Silver Surfer and the Sub-Mariner and said, 'Go ahead'.

"I don't know if it's because Marvel is less continuity bound or if they're just more willing to put out various versions of their characters," he mused.

LARGER than life actor Mr T is to get his own title for a second time, now courtesy of St Albans-based AP comics.

The former wrestler best-known for his roles as *The A-Team's* B A Baracus and as Clubber Lang in *Rocky III*, had his own Now Comics series in 1993. **Mr T and the T Force** lasted only 10 issues.

AP is to launch its **Mr T** comic at the Bristol Comics Expo held over the weekend of May 13-15. The $3.50/£2.50 series is written by **CI**'s own *Web World columnist* Chris Bunting, pencilled by newcomer Neil Edwards and inked by Randy Emberlin, whose credits include **Amazing Spider-Man**, **Ghost/Batgirl** and **X-Men**.

ALREADY in development as a movie, the comic that newcomer Scott Kinney previewed at the San Diego Comicon in 2003 is finally to make it into print.

Written by Kinney and pencilled by Scott Cohn, another newcomer, the four-issue **Killer Stunts** is the story of a Hollywood stuntman who gets hired by a covert government agency. Launched by Alias in April at the introductory price of 75 cents, the series is inked by Mike Manley, the **Draw!** editor whose credits include **Batman**, **Shazam!** and **Superman**.

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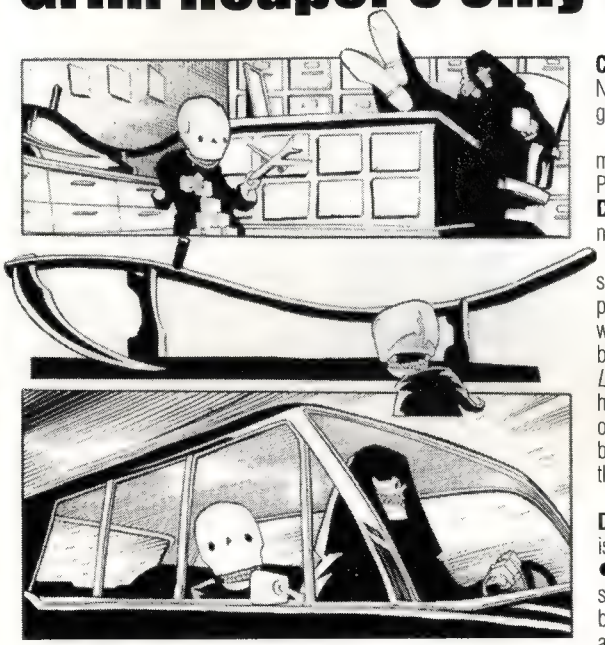
Image spotlight shines on Grim Reaper's only child



Above: Ted Naifeh art for the $4.99 ***Death Jr*** *#1, which ships April 6.*

COURTNEY Crumm creator Ted Naifeh is working on a computer game tie-in for Image Comics.

Based on Backbone Entertainment's forthcoming Playstation Portable game of the same name, **Death Jr** is written by comics newcomer Gary Whitta.

The bimonthly prestige format series – which consists of three 48-page issues – is drawn by Naifeh, who said, "It is sort of a cross between *The Seventh Seal* and *Leave It to Beaver*." About the story, he said, "It's about a more or less ordinary kid whose dad happens to be Death and how he starts to realise that he's different from other kids."

He added, "The best part of the **Death Jr** concept is that the name is pretty much self-explanatory."

● Gary Whitta is also writing the script for a *Death Jr* movie, which is being developed for *Cats & Dogs* and *Son of the Mask*'s Lawrence Guterman to direct.

DC cleans house

COMICS aimed at kiddies and WildStorm titles aside, DC's lowest selling series in recent months have been **Bloodhound**, **Fallen Angel**, **Hard Time**, **The Human Target**, **Kinetic**, **The Losers**, **Monolith**, **Plastic Man**, **Richard Dragon** and **The Witching**.

With the announcement that this April it is axing **The Human Target** – the $2.99 Vertigo series written by Peter Milligan and drawn by Cliff Chiang – with #21, and, from #12, also culling Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Andy Owens' $2.50 **Richard Dragon**, the New York-based publisher has now cancelled all but three of its worst-selling 10 titles.

While **Hard Time: Season Two** is set to premiere in June – with Steve Gerber and artist Brian Hurtt joined by a blast from the past: Mary Skrenes, Gerber's **Omega the Unknown** co-writer – Peter David is claiming **Fallen Angel** is to be cancelled with the May-shipping #20. This concludes a two-parter that introduces Sachs and Violens – the characters the writer and artist George Pérez created at Epic Comics in 1993 – into the DC Universe.

Above: Tim Bradstreet's cover art for ***Hellblazer*** *#206.*

Although DC has refused to comment on David's claim, the writer stated, "The problem is, after you see review after review that says, 'This is the best book you're not reading.' I read the reviews, and I focus on the 'best book' part, and DC, understandably, focuses on the 'not reading' part. What it really comes down to is that sales on the book are somewhere around 11,000, and for the book to be profitable for DC, it's got to be around 15,000. I think that DC just simply doesn't believe that the book is going to jump 4,000 copies with #19 and #20. So they've said they're basically not planning to continue the book."

Losers safe

As for **The Losers**, the comics' British writer, Andy Diggle said that DC had confirmed the Jock-drawn Vertigo title is not for the chopping block. "I think the trades are doing well enough to keep the series going for now. It's one of those books that's just much more popular with the trade paperback crowd. I haven't seen sales figures for the second trade yet but the third is already scheduled.

Above: ***Lucifer*** *#61 cover art by Michael Wm Kaluta.*

"I'm just hoping we can make it to the projected end of the series," he added, referring to the fact that he had always stated his planned story would take two to three years to complete.

Plastic Man also appears to be a survivor but – if David's suggestion is correct that DC does not consider a title viable if selling less than 15,000 per issue – **Books of Magick: Life during Wartime**, **Lucifer** and the recently-launched **Trigger** are all in the danger zone. **Manhunter** hovers just above the apparent cancellation line as do **100 Bullets**, **Hellblazer** and **Swamp Thing**.

However, these last three titles are from the Vertigo imprint and, as mature titles, all do well in the trade paperback market, which dramatically improves their viability.

CONTINUING its mission to bring the cream of British obscurities to an American audience, Active Images – the publishing arm of lettering colossus Comiccraft – is planning a 144-page trade paperback collecting all of cartoonist Lew Stringer's Brickman *strips. The digest-sized* ***Brickman Begins*** *also features a new story by Stringer as well as pin-ups by Dave Gibbons, Kevin O'Neill, Alan Davis* [see art, above], *Dave Hine, Ian Churchill, Hunt Emerson and others. The black and white softcover ships in March, priced $9.99.*

Zorro rides again

HAVING launched with series devoted to Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys, graphic novel publisher NBM's comicbook imprint is looking to expand its line by resurrecting an iconic US hero.

Lined up to follow the young detectives much-loved by young Americans into a Papercutz series is Zorro, California's cowboy equivalent of Robin Hood and the Scarlet Pimpernel.

Shortly to return to the big screen in *The Legend of Zorro*, which stars Antonio Banderas and Catherine Zeta Jones in a sequel to their 1998 film, *The Mask of Zorro*, the masked swashbuckler fought to free California from the tyranny of its Spanish governor in the early 1800s. He was introduced by writer Johnston McCulley in a 1919 issue of **All Story Weekly** magazine.

His return to comics is being orchestrated by Don McGregor. Better-known for his 1970s work on Marvel's *Killraven* and **Black Panther**, the writer has been associated with Zorro since 1993 when he wrote the 12 issues of Topps' **Zorro** comic as well as the **Dracula versus Zorro** and **Lady Rawhide** spin-off mini-series. McGregor also wrote an adaptation of the 1998 movie and a second **Dracula versus Zorro** two-parter for Image and has been writing a daily *Zorro* newspaper strip since 1999.

Above: The swashbuckling Zorro as depicted by Sidney Lima.

Papercutz' **Zorro** is being drawn by Sidney Lima, a Brazilian artist new to American comics.

Zorro #1, priced $2.95, ships in April.

Book Report

FANTAGRAPHICS 9x12" **Sex, Rock 'n' Roll & Optical Illusions** provides a 144-page autobiographical retrospective on the career of **Zap** cartoonist and psychedelic poster artist, Victor Moscoso.

To be published on June 5, the $29.95 hardcover embraces Moscoso's early San Francisco rock 'n' roll posters as well as his underground and solo comix work.

MUSCLES in Motion is Glenn Fabry's 144-page follow up to his $21.95 **Anatomy for Fantasy Artists**, which is being released by Barron's Educational in March.

To be published by Watson-Guptill in June, the new 7¼x10½" softcover is subtitled **Figure Drawing for the Comic Book Artist**. Priced $19.95, it features 800 black and white illustrations.

THE AUTHOR of **Behind the Mask of Spider-Man** and **Caught in the Web** is going behind the scenes again with **The Art of Batman Begins**.

A 9¼x11½" Titan hardcover, Mark Cotta Vaz's 144-pager is to be published on June 24, priced £21.99.

I WAS Someone Dead is former Oni Press editor-in-chief Jamie S Rich's follow up to his 2000 novella, **Cut My Hair**.

The $9.95 softcover, which ships from Oni on May 25, features spot illustrations by Andi Watson. It tells of a man who leads an almost perfect existence except for the nightmares that plague his sleeping hours. Then a monster enters his life, which could be real or a product of his imagination.

IN ITS ongoing three-a-month wave of **2000 AD** collections through Rebellion, DC is finally bringing back into print Alan Moore and Ian Gibson's classic **Halo Jones**.

To be released in June through UK distributors Turnaround, the 200 page black and white trade paperback **The Complete Balad of Halo Jones** is priced £10.99.

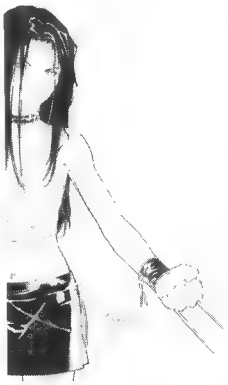
Also set for June release are **Rogue Trooper: Fort Neuro** (Finlay-Day, Wilson, Kennedy, Ewins; £10.99) and **The Complete Indigo Prime** (Smith, Weston, Austin; £9.99).

POCKET Books is to publish four prose novels featuring Mike Mignola's Hellboy.

To be published across the next two years are **On Earth as it is in Hell** (by Brian Hodge), **The New Ark** (Tim Lebbon), **The God Machine** (Thomas E Sniegoski) and **The Dragon Pool** (Christopher Golden).

...news round up... news round up... news round up... news round

TV mutant spin-off scores for Marvel



BILLY Tan is providing a new cover *[art left]* for Marvel's second printing of **X-23** #1.

The new edition of the comic hits the shops on February 23, the same day as the third issue of the title – a $2.99 *Marvel Next* six-parter, which launched on January 12.

X-23 reveals how the young female mutant created by Craig Kyle for the animated *X-Men: Evolution* TV series is related to Wolverine. It is written by Kyle and Christopher Yost and pencilled by Tan. Together with inker Jonathan Sibal, the former Top Cow artist whose credits include **Spirit of the Tao** and **Tomb Raider: Arabian Nights**, he is to team up with Reggie Hudlin when the filmmaker turned new **Black Panther** writer takes over from Mark Millar for a 12-issue run on **Marvel Knights Spider-Man** that begins with #13.

GLAAD nominees announced

THE GAY & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation has announced the nominees for its 16th annual GLAAD Media Awards. Nominated in the Outstanding Comic Book category are: **Ex Machina** (DC/WildStorm), **Hard Time** (DC), **Luba** (Fantagraphics), **My Faith in Frankie** (DC/Vertigo) and **Strangers in Paradise** (Abstract Studio)

The award ceremonies are to be held on March 28 in New York City, April 30 in Los Angeles and June 11 in San Francisco.

Controversial Spectre series collected

THE WRATH of the Spectre is a 200-page trade paperback collecting the Spectre strips from **Adventure Comics** #431-440 as well as three stories intended for the title which – because the Michael Fleischer-written 1974 series was abruptly cancelled as a result of concerns about its overt violence – did not see print until 1988 when they were published in the final issue of a **Wrath of the Spectre** four-parter that collected all 13 of the writer's controversial stories.

Pencilled by Jim Aparo, the $19.99 softcover ships on May 18.

Cartoon Art Trust spotlights Bear artist

RUPERT Bear, Punch and Much More: The Art of Alfred Bestall is an exhibition organised by the Cartoon Art Trust to mark the 70th anniversary of Bestall taking over as the **Daily Express**'s *Rupert the Bear* artist.

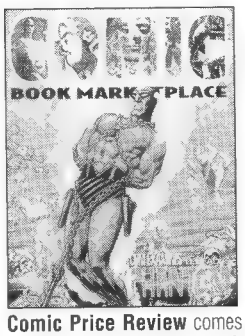
The exhibition features original *Rupert* artwork by Bestall from six decades, including his atmospheric scenes of Nutwood where Rupert and his chums lived, and story sequences never exhibited before. Amongst the works on show is the famous *Frog Chorus* which inspired Paul McCartney's 1984 hit song, *We All Stand Together*. The exhibition shows the full range of Bestall's art, including joke cartoons for **Punch** and his colour illustrations for **The Tatler**.

The Art of Alfred Bestall is being held at the Trust's museum at 7 The Brunswick Centre, Bernard Street, London WC1. It is open from 10.00 to 5.00pm, Tuesday to Saturday from February 8 to April 30.

G.I. Joe publisher looks beyond comics

DEVIL'S Due Publishing is expanding its creative services division to make its stable of freelance artists and writers available to develop such projects as promotional comicbooks, toy designs, video games, collectable card games and to package designs.

Headed by creative manager Aaron Hübrich, the **G.I. Joe** publisher's Devil's Due Creative's impressive client base already includes Hasbro, Wizards of the Coast, DC Comics, Warner Bros, Upper Deck, Sony Online Entertainment, Proctor & Gamble, Barefoot Advertising and Quest Communications.



Gemstone axes Overstreet

THE IMPACT of the Internet has proved too much for Gemstone Publishing, which is dropping two of its print magazines in favour of merging both into a single as-yet untitled online publication.

Comic Book Marketplace is being cancelled with #121 *[see cover, left]* – the 100th issue published by Gemstone – while **Overstreet's Comic Price Review** comes to halt with #19.

"The phenomenal success of ***Scoop*** is a major factor in this decision," stated a spokesperson for Gemstone, which should know, as it produces the online periodical ***Scoop***. "Co-sponsored by Diamond International Galleries, ***Scoop*** has taken less than two and one half years to achieve a weekly readership in excess of 138,000 collectors. Though our audience has been a loyal one over the years, **CBM** has never been able to reach more than a few thousand. Likewise, **OCPR** has devoted readers, but was far outpaced by the growth in ***Scoop***'s readership."

A Bit of Madness from Europe

CHECKER Books is expanding its roster with the first of a planned line of albums by European creators.

Written and painted by France's Emmanuel Civiello, the 9x12½" **A Bit of Madness** tells of the classic battle between good and evil but this time the bad guys have the upper hand. A $24.95 softcover, it ships in May.

The story, which was serialised by **Heavy Metal**, follows the adventures of Igguk, an elf who has been chosen to save his home world, the Land of Faerie, from demonic forces bent on its destruction. The battle between the two powers has raged for years and now Faerie's only hope is for Igguk to find the Heart of Crystal, which holds the essence of Faerie, before the Lord of Darkness can locate it.

NYX crawls to its finish

MARVEL is pulling the plug on its much delayed series about teenage mutants living on the streets.

Written by editor-in-chief Joe Quesada, the Robert Teranashi-

...people in the news... people in

KARL Kerschl, who takes over as regular **Adventures of Superman** penciller with the May-shipping #640, has signed exclusively with DC for two years.

OLIVIER Coipel has signed exclusively with Marvel for an undisclosed term.

The artist, who pencilled the adventures of DC's Legion of Super-Heroes from just prior to 1999's *Legion of the Damned* four-parter through the first 18 issues of 2001's **The Legion**, has lately been filling in on such Marvel series as **Avengers** and **Uncanny X-Men**.

Coipel's first major project for the self-styled House of Ideas is to be the Brian Michael Bendis-written **House of M**. A six-parter premiering in June, the mini is said to have far-reaching consequences for the Marvel Universe.

MAUREEN McTigue has joined iBooks as editor. She was previously editor-in-chief for **Vampirella** publisher, Harris.

ED BRUBAKER has signed exclusively to Marvel for an undisclosed period.

The current **Captain America** writer, he is probably better-known for his work on **Catwoman** and **Gotham Central** for DC and for WildStorm's **Sleeper**.

THE GUARDIAN's political cartoonist Steve *(If)* Bell has

up... news round up... news round up... news round up... news round

pencilled **NYX** is being cancelled with #7 *[cover left]*, which is being rescheduled for August with #6 preceding it in July – over nine months after #5.

"Like my art, writing has become near and dear to me," stated Quesada when addressing the lateness of the $2.99 series which launched in October 2003. "That makes it very sad for me when circumstances pile up and cause delays in getting the stories out. I take full responsibility and hope fans will still be excited to get new issues."

Marvel is preceding the publication of the final two issues with **NYX Must Have 1-3** in May and, one month later, **NYX Must Have 4-5**, which is to include what are described as "a few extra goodies."

Lined up for October is a special oversized hardcover that combines issues of **NYX** with its companion series **X-23**.

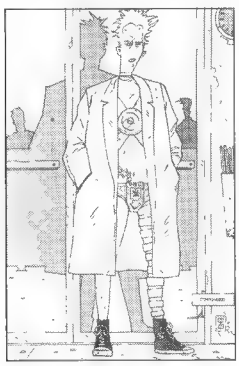
Making of a Sorcerer to take longer

DC DROPPED the frequency of Michael Moorcock's **Elric: The Making of a Sorcerer** from monthly to bimonthly shortly after the Walter Simonson-drawn $5.95 series launched in August. This pushed #2 back from October 27 to December 29 while the third of the four 48-page issues was rescheduled from November 24 to February 23.

Although the second issue shipped on its rearranged date, DC has now removed #3 from the schedules. The issue is to be resolicited at an as-yet unspecified later date.

Atomeka unearths cult classic

ONE OF Ted McKeever's earliest creations, **Eddy Current**, has remained unseen since 1991 when Dark Horse published a hard-to-find hardcover collection of the idiosyncratic writer/artist's 1987 Mad Dog 12-parter.

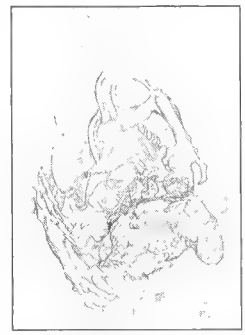


London's Atomeka Publishing is planning to make the series – which led to McKeever creating the Epic published **Plastic Forks** [1990] and **Metropol** [1991] – available to a new audience.

Best known for its **A1** anthology, the publisher is set to reprint the entire black and white series across three 120-page trade paperbacks. Shipping bimonthly beginning in April, each volume is priced $9.95.

The first book is to feature a new three-page story drawn by Dave Gibbons and written by McKeever, who said, "The series itself is about one man's interpretation of the world around him, albeit he's insane, so his perspective is a bit off centre."

Movie monsters clash in graphic novel



SINCE throwing 20th Century Fox's lethal movie extraterrestrials at each other for the first time in **Dark Horse Presents** #36 [1989], Dark Horse has published almost a dozen **Aliens vs Predator** miniseries and one-shots – but times change.

The latest chapter in the Oregon-based publisher's long-running franchise is not being serialised in monthly comics. Instead the sequel to last year's **Thrill of the Hunt** is being released as a 96-page graphic novel in the 5x7" manga/digest format.

Like the 2004 four-parter, **Aliens vs Predator: Civilized Beasts**, it is written by Mike Kennedy and illustrated by Roger Robinson *[cover pencils, above]*.

The $6.95 softcover ships on June 29, priced $6.95.

No Wha Huh? for What If...?

MARVEL has been forced to pull the reprint of its still-unpublished **Wha Huh?** special from the trade paperback that is collecting the recent batch of **What If...?** one-shots.

As a result the February 23-shipping compilation's page count drops from 192 to 152, which trims the price by $3 to $16.99.

Referring to the changes, Brian Michael Bendis commented, "The difference comes in the form of a missing **Wha Huh?** issue, which will not be included in the trade. Initially scheduled for a December 29 release, **Wha Huh?** has seen delay after delay, with its current release date being listed as March 2.

"There is a **Wha Huh?** complete, coloured, lettered, done," added Bendis, who contributed to the one-off humour anthology. "It is at the printer. It has no ship date for legal reasons. No one on editorial or the creative teams is to blame for any of this. And if you think this is how I want it, you are wrong. Hopefully it will be resolved very soon. I am more annoyed than you."

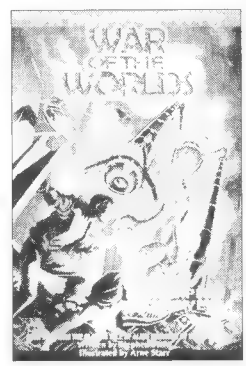
CrossGen: Not dead yet

JUDGE Alexander Paskay of the US Bankruptcy Court of the Middle District of Florida, Tampa Division, has issued an order giving CrossGen another 60 days to file its liquidation plan.

According to the motion for the extension, CrossGen needs more time to pursue a settlement of contested claims of secured creditors.

The assets of the Florida-based publisher were acquired by Disney Publishing in November for $1 million of which approximately $970,000 remains after payment of the break-up fee and some expenses.

In the footsteps of Classics Illustrated



BEST Sellers Illustrated has ambitious plans although the newcomer has only announced the first title in its proposed line of graphic novels.

Obviously hoping to benefit from the publicity surrounding the June 29 premiere of Steven Spielberg's big budget movie version of **War of the Worlds** – which stars Tom Cruise – the California-based fledgling is launching in May with a 100,000 copy first printing of its adaptation of the H G Wells novel. Priced $13.99, it is by **Zen Intergalactic Ninja** writer/creator Stephen Stern and **Star Trek** artist Arne Starr. The cover *[above]* is by Frank Brunner. How this sits with **Striker** already having international rights to the story could be the basis for an update story.

"Older readers will remember the **Classics Illustrated** adaptation of **The War of the Worlds** published in 1955," said Best Sellers vice president Aron Kessler. "But that version is now as dated as the 1953 Paramount film. It's time for a **War of the Worlds** graphic novel that speaks to today's audience."

The news in people news

joined the trustees of The Cartoon Art Trust as has Martin Rowson, who contributes cartoons and cartoon strips not only to **The Guardian** but also to **Daily Mirror**, **The Independent on Sunday**, **The Scotsman**, **The Times** and **Tribune**.

IDW'S vice president of sales and marketing Beau (**Guy Gardner**) Smith has parted company with the San Diego-based publisher to return to freelance writing.

STEPHANIE Fierman has joined DC as senior vice president – sales & marketing. In this newly created position, she is to oversee both the direct sales and the book trade activities of the company, as well as the marketing and promotion of its brands across its own publications and products.

Most recently, Fierman was chief sales and marketing officer at Zagat Survey, where she was responsible for driving global growth through strategic sales, marketing and brand initiatives. Prior to Zagat, she was chief marketing officer at Reed Business Information, where she oversaw traditional and online development of brands including **Variety**, **B&C** and **Publishers Weekly**. Earlier business and brand development work included stints at Winstar Communications, JP Morgan Chase and Citigroup.

Manga launches

As traditionally published in Japan, all manga titles are in a 5¼x6" digest format, in black and white and read from right to left unless otherwise stated.

VIZ IS planning a second imprint aimed at a specific section of the manga market.

Its recently announced *Shonen Jump Advanced* label – which is targeted towards older teens and young adults – is to be complemented in June by *Shojo Beat*. The line of shojo *[girl's]* manga titles is to include a new monthly manga anthology magazine as well as the usual trade paperbacks.

CMX IS adding two shojo titles by female creators to its rapidly expanding roster.

Coming up from DC's recently-launched manga imprint in April is **Fake** creator Matoh Sanami's **Tenryu: Dragon Cycle**, a six-volume series that tells of two sword-packing brothers tracking their father's killer across ancient war-torn China.

It is followed in June by the 10-volume **Seimaden**. Originally serialised in Japan's **Asuka Fantasy DX**, it is written and drawn by **The Almost Legendary Shannon**'s Higuri You, who seeks to answer the question: just how far will a man go for a love that surpasses death?

CMX also has one shonen *[boy's]* title in the pipeline – **Monster Collection: The Girl who Deals with Magic Monsters**, which first appeared in **Monthly Comic Dragon**. Scheduled for a March launch, Itoh Sei's six-volume series – which follows the adventures of the School of Sorcery's most promising Summoning student – is based on a story by Yasui Hitoshi.

Also premiering from CMX in March are Takanashi (**Bikou Route**) Mitsuba's **The Devil does Exist** and **Sword of the Dark Ones** by Kotobuki Tsukasa – a film and TV character designer – from a story by Yasui Kentaro.

Mitsuba's 11-volume series, which was originally serialised in **Bessatsu Margaret**, chronicles the life of Kayano, a shy girl whose single mother is engaged to her high school principal. To make matters worse, he is the father of Kayano's devilishly handsome schoolmate, who intimidates teachers and seems hell bent on wrecking her social life.

First serialised as *Ragnorak* in **Shonen Ace**, the three volume **Sword of the Dark Ones** is set in the late-medieval land of Asgard. It focuses on Leroy, a renowned monster slayer, who is on a secret mission known only to him and his sole companion – his sentient long-sword Ragnarok.

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Stan Lee: The lawyer, the detective and Ringo Starr

Mike Conroy's Frame to Frame

Examining the latest developments between films and comics

WHILE he didn't get everything his own way, Stan Lee has won an important battle in his legal tussle with Marvel.

It's ironic that the man who co-created the superhero universe upon which the New York-based comicbook empire is based should be suing the company that he styled the House of Ideas. But these things happen.

A New York court has ruled in Lee's favour paving the way for the writer, who along with artist Steve Ditko, created Spider-Man in 1961, to receive a multi-million dollar payout. "It could be tens of millions of dollars, that's no exaggeration," claimed his lawyer after the court verdict.

The judge agreed that Lee is entitled to 10% of Marvel's profits from the *Spider-Man* movies, including a share of what it receives not only from the films themselves but also from such ancillary sources as DVDs, TV showings and its own movie-related toys.

What he didn't get was a slice of Marvel's revenue from third-party licensees while his claim for a share of profits from a *Spider-Man* movie merchandising venture jointly by Sony and Marvel and from Marvel's net income from Universal's 2003 *Hulk* movie is going to be left for the jury to decide.

Lee's victory was news around the world although Britain's **Daily Telegraph** showed how little the real world knows – or possibly cares – about comics with its reference to the Los Angeles-based writer as the 'New York Marvel Comics artist.'

Not creator's rights

Anyway, the media weren't looking at the news as a comics story. For them it was a financial one. It was corporate. It was about a Dow Jones-quoted company taking a major and unexpected hit and how its shares – which fell but have since rallied – could be affected.

Beyond the ins and outs of contract laws, that's probably all the story was really about. It was not about creator's rights with Lee finally getting some deal for co-creating Spider-Man.

Do the right thing

Lee doesn't have a problem with not having a share in the ownership of the host of heroes and villains he created for Marvel, saying, "When I wrote these stories, I wrote them as a write-for-hire, so I don't own the characters."

The legal tussle was over the intricacies of the contract he signed with post-Chapter 11 Marvel. "It was very emotional. I guess what happened was I was really hurt," said Lee. "We had always had this great relationship, the company and me. I felt I was a part of it. My contract called for me getting a certain share of the profits - movies, television, licensing and so forth.

"I think when the contract was written, nobody may have expected that those movies would be so successful," he added. "And when they were, I naturally felt, 'Oh boy, this is great!' And then when I found out that nobody seemed to want to live up to that clause in the contract..."

Trying to sum up his feelings, Lee remarked, "Don't forget, I've written about superheroes all my life. And they're the good guys. And they always do the right things. And I always thought our company is the good company, and we always did the right thing, and we always tried to treat the artists, and the writers, and the editors well. And suddenly, I felt I wasn't being treated well, and it really hurt."

With a jury trial still to come on the unresolved issues and Marvel vowing to appeal the January 19 decision, the battle isn't over. Whatever the final outcome, it really won't have much affect on comics but creators are going to have to watch themselves with regard to their comicbook contracts and in particular those clauses relating to their entitlement from movie sales... or any other licensing deals, come to that.

Everybody's going to do their level best to ensure that there's no repetition of the Lee/Marvel scenario.

> **"... we [Marvel] always tried to treat the artists and the writers and the editors well"** ... *Stan Lee*

Real-life superhero

Aged 12, he lost both of his arms while playing with dynamite (like you would). He now lives on a 14-acre estate with his family, plus a chimpanzee and nine tigers, one of which is often seen accompanying him when he drives his specially equipped Hummer around his home town of El Paso.

Who is he? He's the ironically-named Jay J Armes, who overcame his handicap to become a world-class private eye handling such high profile cases as the abduction of Marlon Brando's son, Christian. He normally wears five-fingered prosthetic hands but can replace them with two claws, which are each strong enough to slice through solid steel yet are also nimble and accurate enough to put thread to a needle.

Why's he being mentioned in *Frame to Frame*? Because the 72-year-old Armes, who wrote his autobiography in 1976, is now hooking up with Stan Lee and PoW Entertainment, which is developing a live-action superhero-style movie based on the larger-than-life private eye.

"When I first met Jay, I was bowled over," exclaimed Lee. "I couldn't believe that a real live person could have the incredible powers that he possesses. He even resembles my own fictional comicbook heroes in the respect that most of them gained their super power through some sort of accident. Spider-Man had been bitten by a genetically altered spider. The Hulk was the product of a gamma ray experiment gone wrong and Daredevil was blinded by radioactive chemical. As for Jay J. Armes, he lost both his hands in a childhood accident at the age of 12."

PoW president Gill Champion, added "Jay can now do more with those claws than most people who have hands. He can reach into fire, smash through doors, fire bullets with unerring accuracy, cut through metal, fly utilizing a jet pack, scuba dive, pilot a jet. And he is master of the deadliest karate chop."

The project is certainly one of the more interesting on the PoW plate. If nothing else, much in the same way as the late Christopher (Superman) Reeve refused to let his handicap beat him, Armes' seemingly indom-itable spirit acta as an inspiration to us all.

A first draft treatment for the Armes movie has already been submitted by former **Uncanny X-Men** writer Scott Lobdell.

World's best drummer?

Also on the PoW slate is another news around the world headline maker: Lee's decision to get Ringo Starr animated... as a direct-to-DVD superhero, that is.

"Ringo is beloved worldwide for his commitment to people and his singular wit," claimed Lee. "Our Ringo superhero character will combine these qualities, along with Ringo's secret powers which people generally didn't know about because he has kept them secret, until now."

"This is going to be one of the most exciting adventures I've had all day," quipped Starr, who is probably better known to today's youngsters as the initial narrator for *Thomas the Tank Engine* rather than for his music, his commitment or even his singular wit.

Is it going to work? Well, if it does, it's not going to be Ringo that'll have the DVDs flying off the shelves. Whether you love him or loathe him, he doesn't bring a lot to the table.

● For those who don't know, and there could be a few as it was 35 years ago that the group finally fell apart, Starr was drummer with The Beatles.

Said to have once been asked "Is Ringo Starr the best drummer in the world?" (not the likeliest question, but so the story goes) fellow Beatle John Lennon replied, "He's not even the best drummer in the Beatles!"

This, apparently, was in reference to the ***White Album*** track *Back in the USSR* on which Paul McCartney was forced to do the drumming as Ringo was said to have stormed out before the track was recorded and didn't return for two weeks.

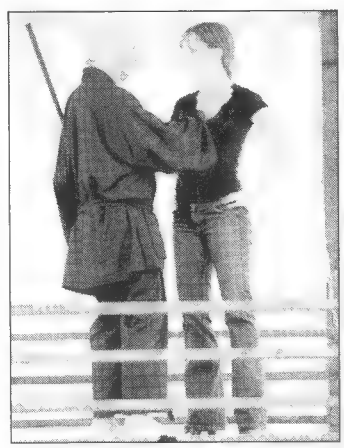
Frame to Frame Review

Daredevil spin-off fails to deliver

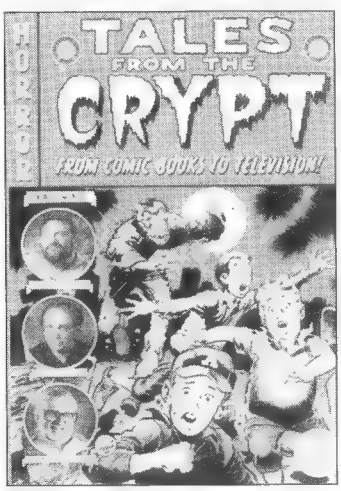
THANKS to Jennifer Garner in the title role, *Elektra* is far more enjoyable than *Daredevil*, where the Frank Miller-created heroine made her movie debut. But then it's also far better than such other superheroine films as 1984's *Supergirl* and the more recent and excruciatingly bad *Catwoman* and that's damning with faint praise.

It's hard to put a finger on exactly what is wrong with *Elektra* other than that it seems to be a string of disconnected interludes rather than a single 96-minute story. Mostly the film is adequate with Garner enhancing it no end – strutting around in a selection of funky fetish outfits – but it certainly doesn't live up to the potential glimpsed during Elektra's scenes in *Daredevil*. So much of it looks like director Rob Bowman took pieces he liked from other comicbook movies – *Kill Bill* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* – and tried to use them on Stuart Zicherman's script, which doesn't know if it wants to be an intelligent drama or an action movie and falls between both stools.

And as for Terence Stamp as Elektra's capricious sensei in his fourth comicbook role – General Zod in the first two *Superman* movies and Willie Garvin in director Joseph Losey's 1966 travesty, *Modesty Blaise* – the word 'wooden' leaps to mind.



Above: Stick [Terence Stamp] gives Elektra [Jennifer Garner] a talking to. Top: Elektra battles Kirigi [Will Yun Lee].



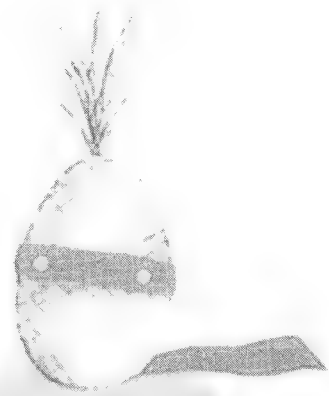
EC Comics story

Well worth checking out by anyone even remotely interested in the history of comics is Chip Selby's *Tales from the Crypt: From Comic Books to Television*, originally broadcast in 2004 as an hour-long special on the Monster satellite channel in the US.

The two-DVD set includes an extended version of the TV documentary – which features archive footage, commentary and artwork – together with a lengthy discussion between Al Feldstein, Ray Bradbury and Jerry Weist and interviews with EC artists Jack Davis, Al Williamson, Jack Kamen and Marie Severin as well as with Robert Overstreet, Russ Cochran and *Night of the Living Dead* director George Romero.

Over four hours for $29.95 – highly recommended.

www.ukwebcomixthing.co.uk



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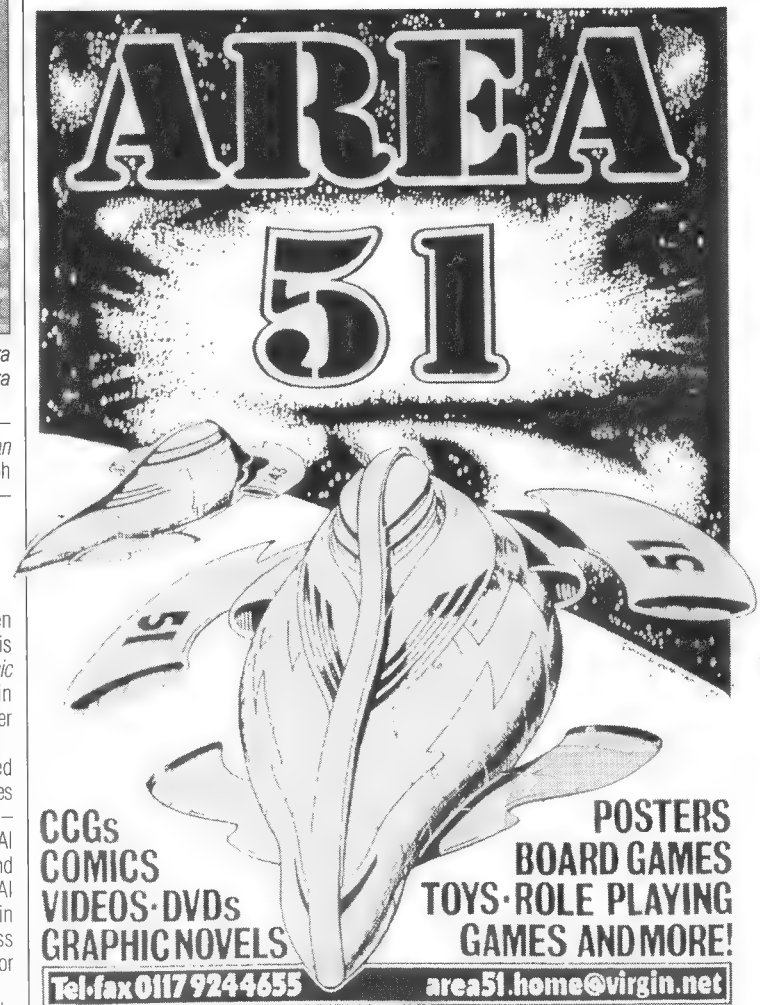
mile end road mile end london, £3 entry (£2.50 advance) | 4PM

AREA 51



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Strange Tales, Even Stranger Formats

Talking Shop with Stephen Holland

Reminding people there's a real mainstream out there

ONE OF coolest aspects of owning a shop is that you get to decide what you stock, and there's nothing like the thrill of discovering a new talent, giving a creator one of their first breaks, or finding a comic that is totally unique then promoting the hell out of it.

Right now I'm sitting in front of **Flimsy Rockets** by Paul Walker, made from bog-standard box cardboard, recycled paper and material that looks suspiciously like my old school duvet cover. I thought I'd sent that to Oxfam. It's all stitched together with a needle and thread, and closed with a cardigan button and cloth loop. Now that's what I call "lovingly hand-crafted". Also, "labour-intensive" and - for us - "highly lucrative" We can sell these faster than poor Paul can make them, because in addition some of the pages are hand-painted, so each piece is unique. It's an environmental fable, from a man evidently practising what he preaches.

We also have a local art student called Leon Sadler who produces the most bizarre work I've seen. It's deceptively juvenile in aspect – all childlike forms and crossings out – but it's astonishingly affecting and we must have sold nearly 100 copies of his first work, which puts most Marvel and DC titles to shame.

> Show your comic to someone other than your mother. Your mother's going to say "Lovely, dear" to anything you do. That's what mothers are for.

Looking around the shelves, most comics and trade paperbacks conform to standard formats, but within Mark's cutting-edge alcove I see comics bound with giant paperclips, comics with 7" singles inside, one from Porcellino with a CD by local band Souvaris, and tiny packets of nonsense like **Now What?** by John Scarrat. One page is a photograph of an alley wall with a hand-written, paper sign attached, which reads: "You have made a wrong turn. I suggest you leave now." I'm quite inspired by that. I want to plaster random locations around Nottingham with similar instructions and see what happens.

On a come-down note, the only difficulty for these creators is getting their work on shelves in the first place. Even fully fledged professionals in the book industry like Tom Gauld and Simone Lia <*www.simonelia.com*>, stocked in Waterstones etc., can't get themselves into most comic speciality shops. Yet we have so far sold over 300 copies of Simone's **Fluffy** (reviewed in **CI** #177), and there are no signs of it abating.

There's another whose work I find it odd that more people aren't stocking, and that's Chronic Fatigue. For a man with M.E., Chronic has an incredible drive, producing an issue of **Mixy**, **Our World**, or a poetry book, a new cloth patch or t-shirt almost every other month. You can view what he calls his "abhorrent creations" at *www.manydeadthings.com*. He's been snapped up by Coldcut Distributors and Forbidden Planet – not a chain renowned for stocking non-commercial material – who bought in 250 copies of the first issue of **Mixy** and have never looked back.

Why? Zombies are so in at the moment. Couple that with the craze for cute-but-dead stuff like **The Cat With A Really Big Head And One Other Story That Isn't As Good** by Dirge and **Fillerbunny** by Vasquez, and you have Chronic's main character: a zombie bunny. Ker-*ching!* I can't claim we've matched FP's sales, but we have gone through over 100 of each, in spite of the fact that I don't particularly rate it. I *don't*, particularly! And for an unknown creator – even a modestly known creator – to sell in force in any given comic shop, it takes the sales staff to really get behind a title.

Yet here we are, just slapping the comics on our shelves, and they sell without our permission. The public come in asking for it, and since I've never seen Chronic reviewed in any magazine, online or otherwise, I am baffled as to how they know he even exists.

But do you know what that means? He'd sell *any*where.

We want to start building a modest data base of retailers (comicbook or otherwise) who really like the unique stuff, so that when someone new comes to the business we can tell them where they'd be best targeting their limited resources. If you're a creator who falls into this category, please get in contact.

In the meantime, every month at least one person asks me how they can get into comics. Which is a little like asking the Virgin staff, "How do I get a record deal?" Except that this is a medium where one trip to the photocopier can start you off. If you want to know how the big distributors work and learn about creator rights etc., then **The Cerebus Guide To Self-Publishing** is invaluable, but if you just want to try your hand at persuading individual retailers to stock your work, here's what would persuade Page 45 to take you seriously:

If you're bringing a sample copy in yourself, leave it with us for a week with your contact details. Please don't ask us to read it there and then. Behind the till, customers come first.

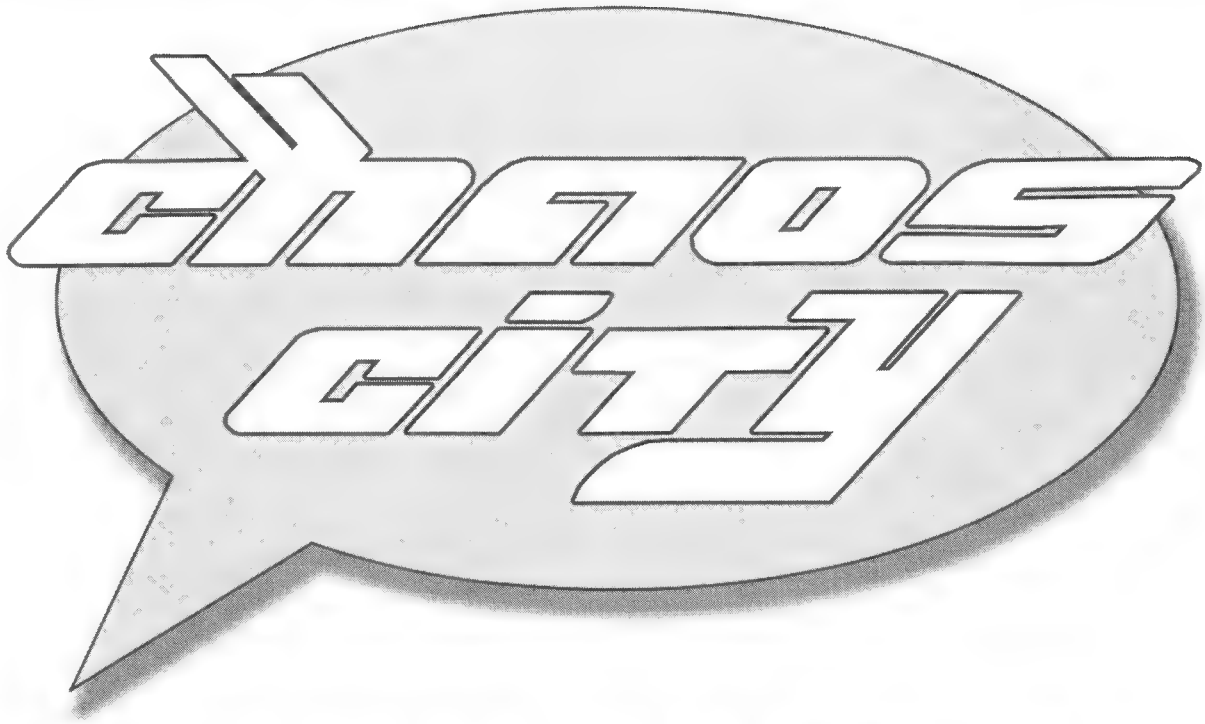
If you're sending it by mail, type out a professional letter with your own contact details introducing your work (briefly – it can speak for itself), listing the contact details of any retailers who currently carry it.

If you have critical endorsements from other creators, great, but if you have any sales endorsements (i.e. from other retailers, but don't make them up, it'll backfire on you badly), even better. That works particularly well it you're sending samples to the smaller distributors either here or in the US.

Lastly – and this is going to sound harsh – please, before you do any of this, show your comic to someone other than your mother. Your mother's going to say "Lovely, dear" to anything you do. That's what mothers are for.

You could save yourself a lot of money.

Stephen Holland runs Page 45, a comic shop in Nottingham UK with Mark Simpson and Tom Rosin. He'll happily provide any contact info he can to other retailers who want to stock titles they don't currently carry.



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Comics Economics

Top 100 US comicbook sales for November 2004

Superman/Batman at #1

Rank	Prior	Title, Issue, Price & Estimated Orders	Publisher
1	(=)	**Superman/Batman #13** $2.95 157,949	DC Comics
2	(=)	**Astonishing X-Men #6** $2.99 134,840	Marvel
3	(1)	**Identity Crisis #6** $3.95 132,384	DC Comics
4	(1)	**Superman/Batman #14** $2.95 121,831	DC Comics
5	(3)	**Superman #211** $2.50 106,469	DC Comics
6	(9)	**Avengers #503** $3.50 105,761	Marvel
7	(N)	**Avengers Finale #1** $3.50 101,431	Marvel
8	(17)	**Ultimate Fantastic Four #13** $2.25 96,820	Marvel
9	(10)	**Ultimate X-Men #53** $2.25 92,133	Marvel
10	(6)	**Uncanny X-Men #452** $2.25 92,051	Marvel

Astonishing X-Men at #2

11	(7)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #68** $2.25 91,075	Marvel
12	(11)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #69** $2.25 90,010	Marvel
13	(N)	**JLA: Classified #1** $2.95 88,747	DC Comics
14	(12)	**X-Men #164** $2.25 88,520	Marvel
15	(11)	**Amazing Spider-Man #514** $2.25 87,121	Marvel
16	(8)	**Green Lantern: Rebirth #2** $2.95 86,273	DC Comics
17	(13)	**Ultimate Fantastic Four #12** $2.25 84,417	Marvel
18	(13)	**Wolverine #22** $2.25 81,841	Marvel
19	(15)	**X-Men End Book 1: Dreamers & Demons #5** $2.99 69,642	Marvel
20	(N)	**Iron Man #1** $3.50 68,992	Marvel
21	(17)	**Marvel Knights Spider-Man #8** $2.99 68,290	Marvel
22	(N)	**Captain America #1** $2.99 67,225	Marvel
23	(16)	**Batman #634** $2.25 63,769	DC Comics
24	(18)	**JLA #108** $2.25 63,355	DC Comics
25	(19)	**Teen Titans #18** $2.50 61,537	DC Comics
■		**International direct market retail orders estimated below 60,000**	
26	(20)	**Supreme Power #13** $2.99 57,768	Marvel
27	(27)	**Detective Comics #800** $3.50 52,399	DC Comics
28	(28)	**Fantastic Four #520** $2.99 51,685	Marvel
29	(21)	**Daredevil #67** $2.99 51,347	Marvel
30	(22)	**Spectacular Spider-Man #21** $2.25 50,633	Marvel
■		**International direct market retail orders estimated below 50,000**	
31	(40)	**JSA #67** $2.50 47,725	DC Comics
32	(N)	**Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes #1** $3.50 46,877	Marvel
33	(N)	**New Thunderbolts #1** $2.99 45,793	Marvel
34	(26)	**Excalibur #7** $2.99 44,753	Marvel
35	(N)	**Marvel Team-Up #1** $2.25 44,530	Marvel
36	(33)	**Flash #216** $2.25 43,618	DC Comics
37	(31)	**Conan #10** $2.99 43,216	Dark Horse
38	(36)	**The Punisher #13** $2.99 42,088	Marvel
39	(32)	**Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes #2** $3.50 41,864	Marvel
40	(29)	**X-Force #4** $2.99 41,535	Marvel
41	(40)	**Venom vs Carnage #4** $2.99 41,526	Marvel
42	(38)	**The Punisher #14** $2.99 41,514	Marvel
43	(62)	**The Pulse #6** $2.99 40,895	Marvel
44	(24)	**Ultimate Elektra #4** $2.25 40,882	Marvel
45	(33)	**New Thunderbolts #2** $2.99 40,104	Marvel
■		**International direct market retail orders estimated below 40,000**	
46	(N)	**Pat Lee's Transformers GI Joe #1** $2.95 38,899	DreamWave
47	(39)	**Action Comics #821** $2.50 38,880	DCComics
48	(N)	**Spider-Man: India #1** $2.99 37,786	Marvel
49	(35)	**Marvel Team-Up #2** $2.25 37,515	Marvel
50	(37)	**Nightcrawler #2** $2.99 36,533	Marvel
51	(53)	**Catwoman: When In Rome #2** $3.50 36,106	DC Comics
52	(32)	**Robin #132** $2.25 35,927	DC Comics
53	(43)	**Justice League: Elite #5** $2.50 35,258	DC Comics
54	(35)	**Batman: Gotham Knights #59** $2.50 35,252	DC Comics
55	(49)	**Adventures of Superman #634** $2.50 35,118	DC Comics
56	(61)	**Army of Darkness: Ashes 2 Ashes #3** $2.99 34,627	Devil's Due
57	(47)	**Marvel Knights 4 #12** $2.99 34,525	Marvel
58	(51)	**Exiles #54** $2.99 34,180	Marvel
59	(45)	**Hulk & Thing: Hard Knocks #3** $3.50 34,129	Marvel
60	(34)	**Nightwing #99** $2.25 33,708	DC Comics
61	(36)	**Rising Star #22** $2.99 33,536	Image
62	(N)	**Space Ghost #1** $2.95 33,032	DC Comics
63	(63)	**Green Arrow #44** $2.50 32,159	DC Comics
64	(N)	**Intimates #1** $2.95 31,578	DC Comics
65	(76)	**Transformers: Generation 1 Vol 3 #9** $2.95 31,272	DreamWave
66	(64)	**Birds of Prey #76** $2.50 31,126	DC Comics
67	(42)	**Batgirl #58** $2.50 31,056	DC Comics
68	(60)	**Powers #6** $2.95 30,431	Marvel
■		**International direct market retail orders estimated below 30,000**	
69	(53)	**Gambit #4** $2.99 29,385	Marvel
70	(38)	**Batman Legends of the Dark Knight #185** $2.50 28,741	DC
71	(52)	**Sabretooth #3** $2.99 28,581	Marvel
72	(71)	**Cable/Deadpool #9** $2.99 27,612	Marvel
73	(68)	**Spawn #140** $2.50 27,376	Image
74	(RS)	**Green Lantern: Rebirth #1** $2.95 27,127	DC Comics
75	(74)	**GI Joe vs Transformers Volume 2 #3** $2.95 27,102	DevilsDue
76	(67)	**Black Widow #3** $2.99 26,840	Marvel
77	(80)	**Y The Last Man #28** $2.95 26,770	DC Comics
78	(73)	**Powerless #6** $2.99 26,439	Marvel
79	(44)	**Catwoman #37** $2.50 26,107	DC Comics
80	(86)	**Wonder Woman #210** $2.25 25,699	DC Comics
81	(79)	**District X #7** $2.99 25,488	Marvel
82	(84)	**Emma Frost #17** $2.99 25,380	Marvel
83	(76)	**Captain America & The Falcon #9** $2.99 25,380	Marvel
84	(72)	**Bullseye: Greatest Hits #3** $2.99 25,176	Marvel
85	(N)	**Marvel Universe: Book of the Dead 2004** $3.99 25,131	Marvel
86	(89)	**Fables #31** $2.50 25,061	DC Comics
87	(N)	**Street Fighter #1** $2.95 24,290	DevilsDue
88	(83)	**GI Joe #36** $2.95 24,277	DevilsDue
89	(85)	**Madrox #3** $2.99 23,971	Marvel
90	(83)	**Amazing Fantasy #6** $2.99 23,913	Marvel
91	(91)	**She Hulk #9** $2.99 23,569	Marvel
92	(87)	**JSA: Strange Adventures #4** $2.50 23,779	DC Comics
93	(77)	**Invaders #4** $2.99 23,709	Marvel
94	(93)	**Mystique #21** $2.99 23,665	Marvel
95	(94)	**Ex Machina #6** $2.95 23,631	DC Comics
96	(82)	**The Authority: Revolution #2** $2.95 23,282	DC Comics
97	(142)	**Witchblade #80** $2.99 22,746	Image
98	(110)	**Transformers: Micromasters #4** $2.95 22,517	DreamWave
99	(75)	**Firestorm #7** $2.50 22,109	DC Comics
100	(92)	**Adam Strange #3** $2.95 22,032	DC Comics

Can you hear the trucks?

Novel Graphics by Paul Gravett

Highlighting the latest and best in graphic novels

DO YOU ever get a sense of déja vu? Recently I've been getting the eerie feeling that I've gone back through the Time Tunnel and it's the late Eighties all over again.

Some of you will remember the buzz starting in 1987 surrounding the so-called 'Big Three' breakout comics: Miller's **Dark Knight Returns**, Moore and Gibbons' **Watchmen** and Spiegelman's **Maus**. From style mags to Sunday papers, from 'yoof' TV to highbrow arts programmes, it seemed the media couldn't get enough of these alien artefacts 'graphic novels'. Here supposedly was proof that comics 'had finally grown up'.

Big-time publishers led by Penguin Books lurched into the market and major bookchains devoted shelf space and window displays to the flurry of titles.

I remember the mood of optimism that comics were poised to cross over and finally enjoy critical acclaim and commercial success. Sound familiar?

Currently, we're witnessing another promising period for graphic novels, so to avoid the boom-bust cycle repeating, I thought it might be instructive to look back and examine why all those hopes in 1987 seemed to go pear-shaped by the early Nineties.

There were a great many contributing factors to the backlash and collapse. A glut of mediocre product drowned all but a few of the strong, original works that came on the heels of the 'Big Three'. A hasty cobbling together of a few serialised comicbooks does not necessarily make a worthwhile graphic novel. For every **Spiral Cage**, **Love & Rockets** or **Sandman** there came a horde of embarrassments. How many more grim, psychotic remakes of superheroes could anyone stomach?

Then there was the disappointment when some of Moore and Miller's much-anticipated and over-hyped follow-ups, like **Killing Joke** or **Give Me Liberty**, came nowhere near the lofty standards they had set for themselves. And why did any publisher think that Lenny Henry, Doris Lessing or Ramsey Campbell were bound to write brilliant graphic novel bestsellers?

On top of these errors in judgement, the tragic finality of Moore and Sienkiewicz's **Big Numbers** collapsing after only two published issues in 1990 could be seen as the symbolic final nail. Was it too ambitious even for two such towering talents to realise the rich potential of this medium?

Another problem was pretension, either way too much of it or not nearly enough. In an attempt to be taken more seriously, some writers and artists tried too hard and became preachy, overearnest or dull. That only served to reinforce the view of some cultural critics who insisted that comics should stick to being 'rock'n'roll', and stay wild, rebellious and permanently pubescent. As one commented, 'Do comics rot your brain? Only if they're done properly.'

Plenty of industry pros, old and young, agreed. They poo-pooed their peers' poncey aspirations and simply pumped out more of the same, only nastier. Pretension and underachievement together bred disenchantment among the new buying public and the media.

Only a few years after singing their praises, in 1991 fickle **Time Out** whined 'If adult comics are the wave of the future, how come nobody's reading them?'

More factors conspired, from the chilling effects of the economic downturn and customs seizures and shop raids of adult comics to the saturating presence of Tim Burton's *Batman* movies and high levels of theft of overpriced graphic novels from bookstores.

It's also worth remembering that of the 'Big Three', two of them featured superheroes, an instant turn-off to many non-comics readers, while **Maus** came to be hailed for its treatment of the Holocaust almost in spite of it being in comics form.

Perhaps the most fundamental problems were the exaggerated expectations of everyone involved. The seismic scale of this cultural shift could never happen overnight. People tend to have a rather rose-tinted view of comics in France or Japan, forgetting that bande dessinée and manga took many years, at least since the Sixties, before they gained an adult audience and a measure of respect.

But maybe here this change in attitude might start to take hold within a generation. Now that it's 15 years later, almost a generation, some truly formidable graphic novels have been completed: **Palestine**, **Preacher**, **Cerebus**, **Bone**, **From Hell**, **Locas**, **Palomar**, **Jimmy Corrigan**, **Epileptic**, **Cages**, for starters. A library of undeniable quality is amassing. Patience is a virtue, because great graphic novels need time to come to fruition and more are slowly ripening.

Chris Ware is laboring on two epics serialised in weekly pages. Crumb is illuminating the Book of Genesis. We've entered an era of large, doorstop compilations like **Lost Girls**, **Black Hole**, **Buddy Bradley**, **La Perdida** and more meaty reads you can't whiz through on the toilet.

It's different from 1987 in other ways now. There may be yet another Bat-film looming, but the public are starting to discriminate between movies from superhero comics and movies from graphic novels like **American Splendor**, **Road to Perdition**, **Ghost World** or **Sin City**. They are also discovering that the originals these come from are frequently far superior. Then there's manga, a whole culture hooking new readers. And the internet, bypassing journos to spread info and opinions as never before.

I'm sure mistakes will be made, bad books published, great books stupidly slammed or ignored, and anti-comics prejudices will rear up (manga have already been the targets). But it's not 1987 and we won't get fooled again, because lots of people, writers, artists, editors and readers, are in this for the long haul, for however long it takes for the graphic novel to achieve its possibilities.

About that vision, pioneer of the form Will Eisner once remarked, "I put up a tollbooth out in a field and I've been waiting for a highway to come through. And now I can hear the trucks."

Actually, Will, there's a massive, never-ending, unstopable convoy of trucks roaring along that route you trailblazed.

And maybe this time round, we might just get there.

PG tips

In a change from our scheduled programme, here are a few highlights from my trip to last January's 32nd International Comics Festival in Angoulême, France.

BD is booming. For the ninth year running, the total number of albums increased and reached a record 2,120 new titles, that's over 40 a week. The biggest seller with a printing of two million was the latest *Titeuf* album by the Swiss Zep, president of this year's festival.

Zep's retrospective is on show through to August at the city's National Comics Centre <www.cnbdi.fr>, but most of the other displays, from Dave Cooper to cave paintings, are over now. But there's time to catch two superb exhibits elsewhere: a double-whammy of Moebius and Miyazaki in Paris till March 13 <www.miyazaki-moebius.com> and *White Man's Remorse*, colonialism in the comics of Pratt, Ferrandez, Stassen and Van Dongen in Charleroi, near Brussels till April 3 <www.remords-homme-blanc-charleroi.com>.

Jean-Christophe Menu from artists' collective L'Association turned 40. For a secret birthday party, crowds of festival-goers flocked to the old L'Eperon cinema, now an exhibition space for wild silkscreens and animated films by Marseilles madmen Le Dernier Cri. <www.ledernier cri.com>

Menu manned the turntables, pumping out The Melvins, Dead Kennedys, The Fall (no Frog rock here). As midnight struck and his birthday began, everyone revealed their striped clothes in honour of Menu's never-changing wardrobe (he always sports jumpers like our Dennis the Menace). Then Trondheim, Killoffer and other artists presented Menu with a special one-off album of strips and cartoons all about the man himself. The partying went on long into the small hours.

Marjane Satrapi, Iranian author of the two-volume **Persepolis** (Cape), was dancing like a dervish zebra at Menu's party. She had something else to celebrate, as she had won another Angoulême prize for Best Album of the Year for **Poulet aux Prunes**. An English translation is coming from Pantheon but meantime you can read a preview in **The Brighton Book** out this May as part of the Brighton Festival. <www.myriadeditions.com>

Among Angoulême "virgins" making it over for the first time were Eddie Campbell, Paul Hornschmeier, Jeffrey Brown, Simone Lia and Alex Robinson, who carried away the Best First Album prize with his mammoth **Box Office Poison**.

Advance Listings

READERS: You can use this Advance Listings *section as an order form with your direct market store or mail order supplier. Simply mark the items you require, copy or remove these pages (or list them on a separate piece of paper) and give it to your supplier, together with a note of your name, address and phone number to guarantee not missing any of the new titles being published. Certain suppliers may not accept standing orders, so check with them first. All prices of US titles listed are in dollars. Import prices are usually converted at a rate of $1.00 = 85p UK sterling. Shipping dates given are the earliest date product will reach stores. All dates, prices and information are assumed to be accurate as provided by publishers.* *Compiled by Jim Hannah and Kieron Mullens*

The following are 32 page colour titles unless stated

ON SALE FROM
APRIL 6

Dark Horse

Apocalypse Nerd 2 (Peter Bagge) Our two hapless heroes, the high strung Perry and the gruff Gordo, are still stuck way out in the woods trying to fend for themselves. b&w $2.99

new **Conan and the Jewels of Gwahlur** 1 (P. Craig Russell) She's made a string of bad choices, and now a young woman has let herself become the pawn of mercenaries – and one of those mercenaries is Conan of Cimmeria. $2.99

Samurai: Heaven & Earth 5 (of 5; Ron Marz & Luke Ross + Jason Keith) The samurai Shiro has found his love, Yoshiko, amidst the fabulous wealth of Louis XIV's palace at Versailles. $2.99

Star Wars: Empire 32 *(Sons* 4 of 5; Thomas Andrews & Adriana Melo + Michael Atiyeh) Luke ends up the captive of a group of wealthy Jabiimi, who have made a deal with the Empire: in exchange for their own freedom, they're going to give the rest of the planet's population to the Empire as slaves. $2.99

new **Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith** 1 (of 4; Miles Lane & Doug Wheatley + Chris Chuckry) Based on the screenplay by George Lucas – the official comics adaptation of the most anticipated of the Star Wars films! $2.99

DC: The New Frontier Vol 2 (Darwyn Cooke; tpbk) Superman, the Suicide Squad, and the Challengers of the Unknown encounter a frightening extraterrestrial lifeform! 208pg $19.99

Deadshot 5 (of 5; Chris N. Gage & Steven Cummings + Jimmy Palmiotti) It's a showdown against half the villains of the DCU as the miniseries reaches an explosive conclusion. $2.99

Detective Comics 805 *(City of Crime* 5 of 12; David Lapham + Jon Lewis & Ramon Bachs + Nathan Massengill) Batman must find Mr Freeze's hideout before a young girl and a priest die! But can Batman contend with an army of inhuman freaks looking for a fight? 40pg $2.99

one-shot **Elfquest: The Searcher and the Sword** (Wendy Pini + Richard Pini & Wendy Pini; sbk) The elves must adapt to a world without the Troll smiths, who forged their weapons and tools. Painfully aware of her human heritage, Shuna embarks on a quest to unite elves and humans in peace. 96pg $14.99

Firestorm 12 (Dan Jolley & Jamal Igle + Rob Stull) With the original Firestorm alive in the mindscape, Jason is in the battle of his life against the augmented Multiplex and Typhoon! $2.50

The Intimates 6 (Joe Casey & Giuseppe Camuncoli + Sandra Hope; *WildStorm)* The intriguing new series continues with a special origin issue that reveals the secret past of Sykes! $2.99

John Constantine – Hellblazer Special: Papa Midnite 3 (Mat Johnson & Tony Akins + Dan Green; *Vertigo)* In 1741, Midnite enlists the aid of an old friend to conjure up a vision of Manhattan where whites are slaves, as he attempts to finish the revolution started by Cuffee years earlier. In the present, Midnite's vision quest is interrupted by the arrival of an unexpected enemy. $2.99

Justice League Elite 10 (Joe Kelly & Doug Mahnke + Tom Nguyen) One team member is a double agent. One is dead. One has been locked up for murder. And another has lost her mind. Now Manchester Black has brought Eve to London – to wipe it off the face of the Earth. $2.50

Justice League Unlimited 8 (Adam Beechen & Carlo Barberi + Walden Wong) The Question's convinced there's a mind-controlled traitor in the Justice League and sets out to investigate. $2.25

Lex Luthor: Man of Steel 2 (Brian Azzarello & Lee Bermejo) Lex Luthor doesn't like problems, but it's clear he loves to solve them. And it's his top-secret solution to ridding Metropolis of his biggest problem – Superman – that may see Luthor triumph once and for all. ... $2.99

Looney Tunes 125 (Earl Kress & David Alvarez + Walter Carzon) Sylvester chases Tweety down a rabbit hole that leads to Wackyland! $2.25

Madara Vol 3 (Eiji Otsuka & Sho-u Tajima) While Kaos and Kirin await Madara's return, battles continue as word spreads about a mighty warrior slaying Moki. Who is this mysterious warrior? 200pg b&w $9.99

new **Seven Soldiers: Zatanna** 1 (Grant Morrison & Ryan Sook + Mick Gray) The sorceress attempts to boost her profile by taking part in a reality TV show that sees her undergoing a rigorous detox on a lush island near Themyscira! $2.99

one-shot **Strontium Dog: The Early Cases** (John Wagner + Alan Grant & Carlos Ezquerra) Johnny Alpha is a man gifted with eyes that can see through nearly anything – even men's minds! Now, in the first collection of Alpha's classic adventures, he meets a new partner, battles vicious killers and takes a journey into Hell itself! 192pg b&w $14.99

Swamp Thing 14 *(Measure of Faith* 2 of 2; Joshua Dysart & Timothy Green II; *Vertigo)* Swamp Thing discovers the terrible secret of the Riverside preacher, and it could cost everything for Jake's father. $2.99

Twilight Experiment 3 (Jimmy Palmiotti + Justin Gray & Juan Santacruz; *WildStorm)* After eight years in a coma imprisoned by an alien race, the most destructive force Earth has ever produced is awake – and he wants to unite the world beneath his hand! $2.99

one-shot **Vertigo: First Taste** (various; *Vertigo;* tpbk) Collecting the premiere issues of six different Vertigo series, this tees itself up as a jumping on point for the 'just curious'. 160pg $4.99

Y: The Last Man 32 *(Girl on Girl* 1 of 4; Brian K. Vaughan & Goran Sudzuka + José Marzan Jr; *Vertigo)* Finally leaving the United States, Yorick and his companions begin an important quest for a missing friend. $2.99

Marvel

Alpha Flight Vol 2: Waxing Poetic (Scott Lobdell & Dave Ross + Clayton Henry) Montreal faces its gravest hour as it falls under attack by wax statues of the entire Marvel Universe. Collects Alpha Flight #7-12. 144pg $14.99

Amazing Fantasy 7 (Fred Van Lente & Leonard Kirk) After the vicious murder of her adoptive parents, Carmilla Black discovers her biological mother is the top scientist of the worldwide terrorist network, A.I.M. $2.99

one-shot **Fantastic Four/ Spider-Man Classic** (various; tpbk) At the dawn of the Marvel Age, Spider-Man meets the Fantastic Four as the Chameleon strikes! Collects Amazing Spider-Man #1; Spectacular Spider-Man #42; Fantastic Four #218; Marvel Team-Up #100, #132-133; and Untold Tales of Spider-Man #96. 152pg $16.99

new **G.L.A.** 1 (Dan Slott & Paul Pelletier) They are the Great Lake Avengers, the guys who got the shortest end of the superhero stick. But with the real Avengers disassembled, they're going to try to step up to the plate and deal with one of their most powerful villains! $2.99

new **Hercules** 1 (Frank Tieri & Mark Texeira) Reeling from the tragic death of Thor, the Prince of Power knows his star is fading fast. So what better way to pump up his Q-rating than to relive his defining moment? $2.99

Incredible Hulk 80 *(Tempus Fugit* 4 of 5; Peter David & Lee Weeks) It was just over thirty years ago that the Hulk fought a sawed-off, scrappy Canadian named Wolverine. And on the island where nothing is as it seems, he's returned – exactly as he was back then – to try and carve himself a piece of the Hulk. $2.99

Marvel Adventures The Thing 2 (Alan Kupperberg & Brandon Thomas + Michael O'Hare) Witness the Blue-Eyed, Ever-Lovin' Thing duke it out with the Incredible Hulk – Hollywood style! $2.25

Marvel Team-Up 7 *(Ring of the Master* 1 of 5; Robert Kirkman & Scott Kolins) The Ringmaster is sick of sitting on the sidelines. He's out to make a name for himself. Unfortunately for Spider-Man and Moon Knight, they are caught up in the middle of his master plan. $2.25

Mystique Vol 4: Quiet (Sean McKeever & Manuel Garcia; tpbk) Mystique is sent on a mission to find Shortpack, who has mysteriously vanished. But she has enough on her mind already: She has to figure out how to assassinate Professor Charles Xavier! Collects Mystique #19-24. 144pg ..... $14.99.

new **Power Pack** 1 (Marc Sumerak & Gurihiru) Katie Power is ready to reveal her secret superhero life to the world, and it's up to her siblings to stop her before the truth can come back to haunt them! .. $2.25

Punisher 19 *(Up is Down and Black is White* 1 of 6; Garth Ennis & Leo Fernandez; *Max Comics)* Nicky Cavella is back with a vengeance – this time hitting Frank Castle where he least expects it – right in the black pit of his hardened heart. $2.99

Runaways 3 *(True Believers* 3 of 6; Brian Vaughan & Adrian Alphona) It's the first public appearance of Excelsior, as six characters again don their classic costumes. But do these young heroes intend to help the Runaways, or destroy them? $2.99

Shanna, The She-Devil 3 (Frank Cho) Doc and his crew race across the Savage Land – and straight into the drooling jaws of a ravenous T-Rex. Can Shanna save them? $3.50

Spider-Girl 85 (Tom DeFalco & Ron Frenz) Spider-Girl learns that her old enemy Funny Face has attacked the local police headquarters and is holding her dad hostage. $2.99

one-shot **Spider-Man/ Doctor Octopus: Year One** (Zeb Wells & Kaare Andrews) Featuring Doctor Octopus' first encounters with both Peter Parker and Spider-Man, the first appearance of Doc Ock's arms, and the true inspiration that led him to build his remarkable appendages.

DC Comics

Action Comics 826 *(Lightning Strikes* 1 of 3; Judd Winick & Ian Churchill + Norm Rapmund) The wizard Shazam makes Captain Marvel aware of a great evil awakened in Metropolis and seeking Superman. $2.50

one-shot **The Authority: Kev** (Garth Ennis & Glenn Fabry; *WildStorm;* tpbk) Down-on-his-luck SAS Corporal Kev Hawkins's life has been an interesting mix of surprises and disappointments – but nothing could prepare him for his repeated run-ins with the superhero team The Authority. 144pg $14.99

Blood of the Demon 2 (John Byrne + Will Pfeifer & Byrne + Nekros) Etrigan is no longer under Jason Blood's control! Now he's on a rampage, using his supernatural powers to wreak vengeance on everything from mystical forces to mere muggers. $2.50

one-shot **The Brave and the Bold Team-Up Archives** Vol 1 (Bob Haney + Robert Kanigher & various; hbk) Collecting The Brave and The Bold #50-56 and #59 (Nov 1963-May 1965) , featuring the pairings of Green Arrow and The Martian Manhunter, The Flash and The Atom, and more! 224pg $49.99

close-up

Thirteen

DC Comics/2000AD

Writer: Mike Carey

Artist: Andy Clarke

Action-packed story by Lucifer scribe Mike Carey, with artwork by Sinister Dexter's Andy Clarke. When a London punk with mild telekinetic powers discovers a black pearl that increases his abilities to unbelievable levels, he thinks he's struck it rich. But the pearl's original owners want it back. 96pg $12.99

ON SALE APRIL 13

Collects Spider-Man/Doctor Octopus: Year One #1-5. 120pg ..... $13.99.

Spider-Man/Human Torch 4 (Dan Slott & Ty Templeton) It's taken awhile, but it looks like these two young heroes are finally becoming good friends. What could possibly come between them now? $2.99

Strange 5 (J. Michael Straczynski + Samm Barnes & Brandon Peterson) Stephen Strange discovers the true role the Ancient One intends him to fulfil as enemies mount on every side. .. $3.50

new **Toxin** 1 (Peter Milligan & Darick Robertson) When a full-scale jailbreak leaves New York overrun with supervillains, Pat sees the perfect opportunity to use the creature sharing his body for good. $2.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 75 *(Hobgoblin* 4 of 6; Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley) Young Harry Osborn has come to believe that his friend, Peter Parker, killed his father Norman when Peter was Spider-Man. Now, Harry plans a horrifying, misguided vengeance that could end Peter's life. $2.25

X-Men: Age of Apocalypse 6 (Akira Yoshida & Chris Bachalo) This 10th Anniversary Age of Apocalypse event comes to a close with this star-shattering conclusion! What will be the final fate of the AoA universe? $2.99

X-Men/Fantastic Four 5 (Akira Yoshida & Pat Lee) The climactic battle – will the combined might of the Earth's two greatest super hero families be enough to save Manhattan – and the world – from total annihilation? . $3.50

X-Men Unlimited 8 (Paul Di Filippo + James Peaty & Cliff Richards + Yvel Guichet) Angel helps some sick children soar into the clouds, while Beast goes out for a little culture, only to find that, for a mutant, these things are easier said than done! $2.99

ON SALE FROM

APRIL 13

Dark Horse

100 Bullets #60 (Brian Azzarello & Eduardo Risso; *Vertigo)* Lono takes his new apprentice, Loop Huges, to Chi-town to continue his deadly training. ... $2.50

Blade of the Immortal 100 *(Trickster* 2 of 4; Hiroaki Samura) Armed with kessen-satsu, the only poison known to damage Manji's immortal blood, three Itto-ryü warriors target Manji and Giichi. Crippled and sightless, will Manji be able to fend off a vicious, new Itto-ryü foe? Double sized! 64pg b&w $5.99

Michael Chabon Presents The Amazing Adventures of the Escapist 6 (various) Spirit meets the Escapist! Legendary comics godfather Will Eisner returns to his world-famous creation for a meeting that neither WWII-era hero will soon forget. The first new Spirit story both written and drawn by Eisner to see print in decades! Plus other material. 80pg $8.95

Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith 2 (of 4; Miles Lane & Doug Wheatley + Chris Chuckry) Battles rage in space, armies clash on alien worlds, and the galaxy is forever changed.$2.99

DC Comics

Aquaman 29 (John Arcudi & Patrick Gleason + Christian Alamy) Aquaman goes to the JLA to gain leverage against GeneTech, but finds the group in the middle of its own problems as the Themyscira crisis heats up! $2.50

Batman: Gotham Knights 64 (A.J. Lieberman & Al Barrionuevo + Bit) Poison Ivy is desperate to cure herself of her abilities before anyone else gets killed. Batman is eager to help, but Hush wants her killer powers to remain. $2.50

one-shot **Batman: The Greatest Stories Ever Told** (various; tpbk) A movie-oriented collection of some of the Dark Knight's finest adventures! Contains stories from Detective Comics 33 (1939), Batman #5 (1941), Batman #62 (1950), and more. 192pg $19.99

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 190 (J. Torres & David Lopez + Fernando Blanco) What looks like a series of petty crimes committed by Mr Freeze quickly becomes a much more serious situation, once Batman learns Freeze has nothing to live for. $2.50

The Batman Strikes! 8 (Bill Matheny & Christopher Jones + Terry Beatty) Gotham City's never been hotter, which can only mean one thing: Firefly's back! Will Batman be able to stop this pyromaniac before Gotham's reduced to ash? $2.25

final issue **Bloodhound** 10 (Dan Jolley & Leonard Kirk + Robin Riggs) It's the end of the line for Travis Clevenger as DC's brutal new hero finds himself outmatched by the martial-arts master Zeiss. $2.99

Breach 4 (Bob Harras & Marcos Martin + Alvaro Lopez) Breach's battle in South Africa against the agents of Kobra has attracted Superman, Batman and Martian Manhunter to investigate. $2.50

Fables 36 *(Homelands* 1 of 5; Bill Willingham & Mark Buckingham + Steve Leialoha; *Vertigo)* In the midst of all the conquering and the slaying comes a mysterious masked man on a quest to find the woman in red he believed was killed centuries ago. $2.50

From Eroica With Love Vol 3 (Aoike Yasuko) Constant putdowns continue from the Middle East to the icy cold of Europe, where Eberbach is forced to hire Eroica. 224pg b&w $9.99

Gotham Central 30 (Greg Rucka & Stefano Gaudiano) Allen and Montoya have travelled to Keystone City to save Officer Andrew Kelly, who's been transformed into a terrible monster. $2.50

Green Arrow 49 (Judd Winick & Tom Fowler + Rodney Ramos) Arsenal has been kidnapped by the assassin Drakon! The only way Green Arrow can save Arsenal is to find the people paying for the killer's work. And even Ollie will be surprised to find out the true identity of the man behind the curtain! ... $2.50

JLA 113 *(Syndicate Rules* 7 of 8; Kurt Busiek & Ron Garney + Dan Green) A divided JLA must face the full power of the most dangerous weapon ever devised by the Weaponers of Qward, with the CSA waiting to destroy the survivors. But a sudden threat to the Crime Syndicate's own world may change the game completely. ... $2.25

JSA 72 *(JSA/JSA* 5 of 5; Geoff Johns & Don Kramer + Keith Champagne) The teams come together to stop Degaton's horrible plans. But what secret weapon must they face, and how will the JSA of tomorrow help save the JSA of yesterday? $2.50

Majestic 4 (Dan Abnett + Andy Lanning & Neil Googe; *WildStorm)* Assaulted from all sides, Majestic finally uncovers the truth behind the immense ark-ship and realises the populations of countless worlds will perish unless he can put things right. $2.99

new **Megalex** Vol 1 (Alexandro Jodorowsky & Fred Beltran; tpbk) A clone known as the Anomaly and the freedom fighter Adamâ fight to end the stranglehold the city of Megalex has over the world. 112pg $14.99

new **Mnemovore** 1 (of 6; Hans Rodionoff + Ray Fawkes & Mike Huddleston; *Vertigo)* Kaley Markowic is an Olympic hopeful whose career is brought to a crashing halt. Badly injured, Kaley can barely remember her boyfriend, her family – her entire life. Now, a horrifying creature appears on the scene, violating her loved ones and damaging their minds. Kaley is lost in a world where nothing has precedent and must fight to protect those who are closest to her – even if she can't recall them. $2.99

Nightwing 107 (Devin Grayson & Phil Hester + Ande Parks) Dick has left Blüdhaven, and the only people he can trust are those who'd kill him if they knew his secrets. $2.25

Scooby-Doo 95 (various) A freaky cyber-spook plays cat-and-mousepad with Scooby and Shaggy! $2.25

one-shot **Superman vs The Flash** (various; tpbk) A collection of some of the greatest races between the Man of Steel and the Scarlet Speedster, from Superman #199, The Flash #175, World's Finest Comics #198, World's Finest Comics #199, Dc Comics Presents #1-2, and more. 208pg $19.99

one-shot **Thirteen** (Mike Carey & Andy Clarke; tpbk) *See Close-Up, left.*

Tom Strong 32 (Michael Moorcock & Jerry Ordway; *America's Best Comics)* Tom Strong and Solomon are recruited on a mission to save the multiverse. But has their information been tainted? $2.99

Wild Girl 6 (Leah Moore + John Reppion & Shawn McManus + J.H. Williams III; *WildStorm)* Did Rosa survive her encounter with the Crocodile? And if so, will she have enough energy left to face the Dog Man and save her family? .. $2.99

Marvel

Black Panther 3 (Reginald Hudlin & John Romita Jr.) Many years ago, Klaw killed the reigning Black Panther – but not without a price. Learn how he did it as he readies himself for the death of T'challa! $2.99

one-shot **Bullseye: Greatest Hits** (Daniel Way & Steve Dillon; tpbk) The untold origin of Daredevil's ultimate nemesis is revealed at last! And who thought being bad could be so much fun? Collects Bullseye: Greatest Hits #1-5. 120pg $13.99

District X #12 *(Underground* 6 of 6; David Hine & Lan Medina) Ismael and Bishop finally confront the tortured monster that dwells underneath District X! Can Ismael overcome his fears and do what's right? $2.99

Exiles 62 *(Time Breakers* 1 of 4; Tony Bedard & Mizuki Sakakibara) Why is the Timebroker so evil all of a sudden? Who are the Timebreakers? $2.99

Gambit 9 *(Voodoo Economics* 3 of 3; John Layman & Georges Jeanty) It's bad enough that the living dead are overrunning New Orleans, but one of the zombies just happens to be the reanimated corpse of an invulnerable supervillain! $2.99

Marvel Knights 4 #17 (Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Jim Muniz) Branded as outlaws and trapped in a pyramid of horrors – with no modern technology at their disposal – how will Reed, Sue, and Ben escape Ancient Egypt to stop the mad tyrant Ramades in the present? $2.99

Marvel Knights Spider-Man 13 (Reginald Hudlin & Billy Tan) Peter Parker's got an incredible new pad, a new job, and – although he doesn't know it – a new nemesis who's everything that Peter isn't. $2.99

one-shot **Marvel Milestones: Venom** (Jim Shooter + Stan Lee & Mike Zeck + Steve Ditko) In time for Toxin 1,

Illuminations

Highlights from April's releases

Selected by Martin "Biff" Averre

APRIL is rather a lacklustre month for new titles as far as Dark Horse, DC and Marvel are concerned – which is rather useful because it gives me space to highlight some excellent independent titles.

But before I get to those I must just let off a bit of steam about the vast number of mini-series that Marvel is currently publishing. It seems like only yesterday that Joe Quesada promised us fewer mini-series and spin-offs and more top quality talent working on mainstream titles. While we do have some excellent monthlies now from the House of Ideas can they really justify 25 mini series running in April? Of them all I find that only **Toxin** #1 (of 6, by Pete Milligan and Darrick Robertson) has any artistic, fan and retailer merit. Toxin is the son of Carnage who is the son of Venom. The previous Venom and Carnage series, normally at least one a year, have sold well, been good reads and proved that they hold the fans' interest over the years. Case in point is that we just sold **Venom: Lethal Protector** #1-6 (the first of these series, from 1993) once again only last week. There is still a demand for this type of Spider-Man spin-off each year. However, **Spider-Man Breakout** #1of 5, should be a part of **Amazing Spider-Man** or **New Avengers**.

Sales 4/5 Quality 5/5

When CrossGen ceased, we lost the publisher of a variety of genres ignored by the DC. Marvel and Image. The one genre I miss the most is Pirates. For shame on me that last month I failed to mention a new publisher, Kandora, which released **Barbarossa and The Lost Corsairs**, issue 2 being an April release. The talented team of Brian Augustyn and H.S.Parks have caught the right atmosphere in the artwork and the story premise is cool: Privateer Barbarossa is one moment sailing storm tossed seas on Earth the next is in a new realm of magic, mystery and mayhem, immediately caught up in political intrigue. If you enjoyed **El Cazador** then let your local store know you want it to stock **Barbarossa**. If they don't, then Biff will send Captain Jack Sparrow round to see them.

Sales 2/5, but should rise to 4/5 Quality 4/5

The same team has also got a new #1 this month, **Jade Fire**. This time the team gives us an intriguing fantasy adventure tale. Somewhere in Asia, aeons ago, stood The City. Even then it was older than any of its millions of residents could remember and a bastion of peace and learning for millennia. However, a slithering snake of corruption is changing the life and shape of the city and only Jade Fire has the power and ability to prevent the spread of this evil. Cool.

Sales 1/5, but should rise to 4/5 Quality 4/5

Another publisher proving to be a pioneer of new and old is IDW, which, having given the original creators of **Grimjack** the chance to produce work that has eclipsed their earlier achievements, has now given Mike Grell the chance to return to **Jon Sable Freelance**, his seminal body guard/secret agent/private detective. The original series published by First saw Mike produce his finest work outside of DC's **Warlord**. A change of pace from spandex is always needed, even by someone like me who still loves spandex (to read, that is), and this will not disappoint. **Sales 4/5 Quality 5/5**

With 23 years of comic retail experience as Ace Comics, Biff has also produced his ***Illuminations*** *monthly fanzine for 19 years before moving it to the web last year.*

there comes a costume. It's the first appearance of Venom, as Spider-Man's new symbiotic black costume, from Secret Wars 8! 48pg $3.99

Mary Jane: Homecoming 2 (Sean McKeever & Takeshi Miyazawa) Liz has been acting odder than usual, and Mary Jane is determined to get some answers – even if it costs her their friendship! $2.99

New Thunderbolts 7 (Fabian Nicieza & Tom Grummett) Flushed with success, the Big Apple's newest heroes have to face their greatest challenge yet: an adoring public and the reflections in their mirrors! $2.99

Powers 10 (Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Avon Oeming) Get ready for the biggest fight scene Powers has ever seen as Retro Girl is faced with a foe more powerful than she might be ready for. $2.95

Powers Vol 8: Legends (various; tpbk) Homicide detectives Christian Walker and Deena Pilgrim investigate murders specific to superhero cases. With all super heroes declared illegal, a Powers crime wave has hit the city, and hit hard. 272pg $19.95

She-Hulk Vol 2: Superhuman Law (Dan Slott & Juan Bobillo + Paul Pelletier; tpbk) As a superhuman lawyer, She-Hulk has tried some of the strangest cases on Earth...but all of that is about to change! Empowered by the Living Tribunal, Shulkie is heading into deep space to practice Universal Law! Collects She-Hulk #7-12. 144pg $14.99

new **Supreme Power** Vol 1 (J. Michael Straczynski & Gary Frank; hbk) Babylon 5 creator writer J. Michael Straczynski presents a new vision of a world about to give birth to its first generation of superheroes! Collects Supreme Power #1-13 and extras. 352pg $29.99

Thor: Son of Asgard Vol 2: Worthy Digest (Akira Yoshida & Greg Tocchini) TAfter their adventures across the wilds of Asgard, it's back to school for Thor, Balder and Sif – but when you're in training to be a warrior, study hall isn't so quiet! Collects Thor: Son of Asgard #7-12. 144pg $7.99

Ultimates 2 #5 (Mark Millar & Bryan Hitch) The Ultimates are pitted in pitched battle against their renegade member – The Mighty Thor! Can even the greatest superteam on Earth take down a Norse thunder god? $2.99

X-Force: Shatterstar 3 (Rob Liefeld + Brandon Thomas & Marat Mychaels) Shatterstar continues to pursue Spiral, seeking to prevent her from obtaining the deadly Five Fingers of Annihilation. $2.99

X-Men: The End – Heroes And Martyrs 2 (Chris Claremont & Sean Chen) The alien adversaries return in full force to complete their annihilation of Charles Xavier's School and all his students. $2.99

Young Avengers 3 *(Sidekicks* 3 of 6; Allan Heinberg & Jim Cheung) It's the Young Avengers versus the Avengers when Captain America and Iron Man force Patriot, Asgardian, and Hulkling to reveal their secret identities. $2.99

ON SALE FROM

APRIL 20

Dark Horse

new **Billy the Kid's Old-Timey Oddities** 1 (Eric Powell & Kyle Hotz) Billy the Kid is now free to roam America and start a new life, unhindered by his past crimes and criminal record. Free, that is, until someone discovers his true identity. $2.99

Conan 15 (Kurt Busiek & Greg Ruth) When he discovers an Aquilonian wizard and daughter living in the woods outside his village, Conan is torn between his respect for their rogue existence and his chance to become a real Cimmerian warrior by exposing the foreign spies. $2.99

Damn Nation 3 (Andrew Cosby & J. Alexander) The plot to suppress the cure and keep America on its knees comes to light, and the biggest threat – that of human betrayal – is amplified with a terrible vampire transformation. $2.99

Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith 3 (of 4; Miles Lane & Doug Wheatley + Chris Chuckry) Heroes become martyrs, and friends become enemies – and the galaxy is forever changed. $2.99

Star Wars: General Grievous 2 (Chuck Dixon & Rick Leonardi + Mark Pennington) General Grievous and his forces invade the planet Gentes and take it's population and their production facilities as trophies of war. $2.99

DC Comics

Adventures of Superman 639 *(Lightning Strikes* 2 of 3; Judd Winick & Ian Churchill + Norm Rapmund) Superman confronts the evil force plaguing Metropolis. What will Superman do when some of those closest to him turn against him? $2.50

new **Batman: Jekyll & Hyde** 1 (of 6; Paul Jenkins & Jae Lee) Jekyll & Hyde is a story of duality that examines how one man can seemingly harbour two souls, each bent on the other's destruction. But who is more honest: the man who acknowledges his dark side or the man who suppresses it? $2.99

one-shot **Bilal Library: Memories** (Enki Bilal) Collects Enki Bilal's two graphic novels Memories of Outer Space and Memories of Other Times into one trade paperback! 144pg $17.99

Birds of Prey 81 (Gail Simone & Joe Bennett and Jack Jadson) Huntress has gone AWOL, and you'll be shocked at where she turns up! Who's taking her place next to Canary on a dangerous mission to Singapore? $2.50

one-shot **Bite Club** (Howard Chaykin + David Tischman & David Hahn; *Vertigo; tpbk) See Close-up, below.*

The Books of Magick: Life During Wartime 10 *(Tumbling Dice* 2 of 2; Si Spencer + Neil Gaiman & Dean Ormston; *Vertigo)* It's a familiar story retold from a fresh perspective, as we learn the sick, ugly truth behind Dog's jealous outbursts about his sister's love life. $2.50

new **Day of Vengeance** 1 (of 6; Bill Willingham & Justiniano + Walden Wong) Ragman finds himself at the magical core of the DCU, where he finds himself aligned with an unlikely ally: The Enchantress! $2.50

Ex Machina 10 *(Tag* 5 of 5; Brian K. Vaughan & Tony Harris + Tom Feister; *WildStorm)* Mayor Hundred finally confronts the supernatural horror that's been terrorising the subways and discovers the unexpected bond it shares with his previous career as the super-heroic Great Machine. $2.99

one-shot **Green Lantern Secret Files 2005** (various) Hal Jordan relives some of the most meaningful flights in his life, joined by an unexpected partner. 48pg $4.99

Hawkman 39 (Justin Gray + Jimmy Palmiotti & Joe Bennett + Ruy Jose) Hawkman is missing, and Hawkgirl is on the hunt for those responsible. Things go from bad to worse when the master hypnotist Thought Terror arrives with revenge on his mind! $2.50

The Human Race 2 (Ben Raab & Justiniano + Walden Wong) Young Ulysses has joined the conspiracy of wildly powered individuals whose sworn duty is to protect the human race from outside mutations. $2.99

final issue **Human Target** 21 *(The Stealer* 3 of 3; Peter Milligan & Cliff Chiang; *Vertigo)* Chance returns to Los Angeles bent on revenge against the man who stole his life and identity. But Chance may encounter the biggest surprise of all when he learns there's one grave question still to be answered. $2.99

JLA Classified 6 *(I Can't Believe It's Not the Justice League* 3 of 6; Keith Giffen + J.M. DeMatteis & Kevin Maguire + Josef Rubinstein) Booster Gold has accidentally banished half of the Super Buddies to Hell for all eternity, and now it's time for them to learn their fate. $2.99

Land of the Blindfolded Vol 3 (Tsukuba Sakura) Through a careless mistake, the school doctor learns of Kanade's powers. But why is he so intent on stopping her from changing the future? 200pg b&w $2.99

Lucifer 61 *(Breach* 3 of 3, Mike Carey & Peter Gross + Ryan Kelly; *Vertigo)* As the Lilim and their allies march on Heaven, Jill Presto's magically prolonged pregnancy finally reaches term – and the unborn child has not only Jill's fate, but that of Lucifer and Elaine in its hands. $2.50

Manhunter 9 (Marc Andreyko & Manuel Garcia + Jimmy Palmiotti) Manhunter goes up against the mind-bending powers of Phobia – and someone begins stalking Manhunters from the past. $2.50

Ocean 6 (of 6; Warren Ellis & Chris Sprouse + Karl Story; *WildStorm)* As the mysterious beings who have slumbered for an eon begin to stir, Nathan Kane and his crew must intervene before worlds are laid waste - either by the ancient race or the greedy company trying to hijack them! 48pg $3.50

Powerpuff Girls 61 (various) Heads up, readers – little Bubbles just got too tall for Townsville! How will the Girls shrink their sister back down to size? ... $2.25

The Question 6 (Rick Veitch & Tommy Lee Edwards) Vic Sage uncovers the gruesome murder at the Science Spire construction site, only to be ambushed by Minos and his heavily armed cohorts! $2.99

Robin 137 (Bill Willingham & Giuseppe Camuncoli + Sandra Hope) Tim Drake must face down the Rising Sun Archer and the Dark Rider. But who's lurking in the alleys, and why does he have an interest in the Boy Wonder? . $2.25

new **Seven Soldiers: Klarion the Witch Boy** 1 (Grant Morrison & Frazer Irving) Klarion's nature is to rebel against the powers-that-be, which isn't a good idea in such a tightly controlled society – one in which people who don't conform are swiftly judged and burned at the stake. . $2.99

Space Ghost 6 (Joe Kelly & Ariel Olivetti) Space Ghost's most desperate enemy forms a pact with the creature who's sworn to destroy the entire human race! . $2.99

The Spirit Archives Vol 16 (Will Eisner; hbk) Collecting Spirit sections from 1/7/48-6/27/48! This edition includes the introduction or Powder Pouf, the return of Silk Satin, and more. 216pg $49.99

Superman/Batman 20 *(With a Vengeance* 1 of 6; Jeph Loeb & Ed McGuinness + Dexter Vines) Superman and Batman confront The Maximums! Can the World's Finest pair take on a squad of revenge-seeking superheroes who are on the hunt for the murderer of one of their teammates? $2.99

Teen Titans 23 *(Lights Out* 3 of 3, Geoff Johns & Mike McKone + Marlo Alquiza) Cyborg's contingency plan may fall apart before it's even put together, and the new Speedy learns firsthand what it means to be a Titan when she discovers Doctor Light's secret. $2.50

Trigger 5 (Jason Hall & John Watkiss; *Vertigo)* Carter Lennox's life is spiralling out of control, and things only get worse when he spends a day following what appears to be his doppelganger $2.99

Wonder Woman 215 (Judd Winick & Rags Morales + Michael Bair) In *Tartarus*, the goddess Athena sends Wonder Woman on a journey to retrieve something believed lost to the Olympian Gods forever. $2.25

Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 519 *(New Avengers* 1 of 6; J. Michael Straczynski & Mike Deodato) Springing out of the pages of New Avengers, you won't believe what the fickle hand of fate has in store for Peter Parker, Mary Jane and Aunt May. $2.25

Astonishing X-Men 10 (Joss Whedon & John Cassaday) A familiar face returns to the pages of Astonishing X-Men just as things take a turn for the worse. But will the helping hand be in time? $2.99

Cable/Deadpool 14 (Fabian Nicieza & Patrick Zircher) Deadpool has to scour Cable's island paradise of Providence to solve the murder of a hated and feared terrorist. $2.99

Cable/Deadpool Vol 2: The Burnt Offering (Fabian Nicieza & Patrick Zircher; tpbk) A floating city promises hope for humans and mutants alike! But if Cable plans to be Earth's Savior, will Deadpool accept the role of Judas? Collects Cable/Deadpool #7-12. 144pg $14.99

Captain America 6 *(Out of Time* 6 of 6; Ed Brubaker & Steve Epting) Who killed the Red Skull? Who is the mystery assassin we have yet to see? This issue answers those questions and more. $2.99

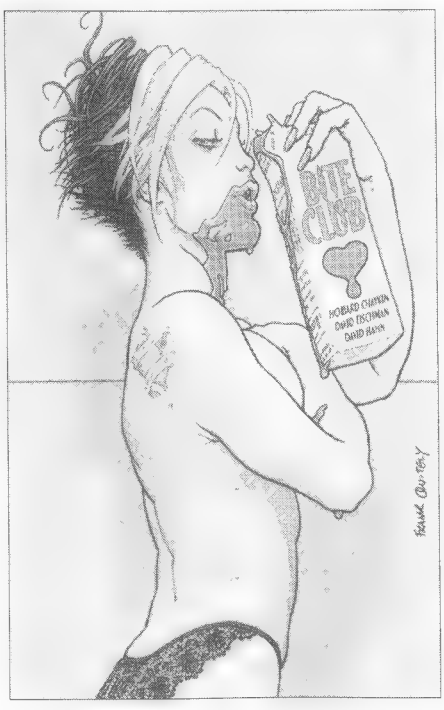
Daredevil: Redemption 4 (David Hine & Michael Gaydos) Matt Murdock's nightly patrols as Daredevil backfire spectacularly in the small, God-fearing town of Redemption, as the fight turns dirty and the devil is accused of a crime he didn't commit. $2.99

Essential Hulk Vol 3 (various; tpbk) The misunderstood monster's earliest adventures continue as Robert Bruce Banner's rampaging alter ego clashes with Namor the Sub-Mariner, the Fantastic Four and the Avengers! Collects Incredible Hulk #118-142, Captain Marvel #20-21 and Avengers #88. 584pg $16.99

Fantastic Four 525 *(Dream Fever* 1 of 2, Karl Kesel & Tom Grummett) Diablo's back – more dangerous than ever as the potion-toting terrorist declares alchemical warfare on the FF! $2.99

Fantastic Four 526 *(Dream Fever* 2 of 2; Karl Kesel & Tom Grummett) The World's Greatest Imaginauts are becoming more and more tired, irritable, delirious... sick! Coincidence? Or part of Diablo's nightmarish plan? ... $2.99

Livewires 3 (Adam Warren & Ricardo Mays) Sabotaging and destroying top-secret research programmes is a tricky line of work, as the Livewires discover during a mission that requires supercharged pheromone seduction, high-speed hacking, and the detection



close-up

Bite Club

Vertigo

Writers: Howard Chaykin + David Tischman

Artist: David Hahn

New trade paperback collecting the sexy and hot-blooded miniseries in colour. They say that blood is thicker than water, but it isn't thicker than money – not even for a family of vampires like the Del Toro clan, whose cartel has run organised crime in Miami for nearly a century. 144pg $9.99

ON SALE APRIL 20

and defeat of holocamouflaged, half-ton robot snipers. $2.99

one-shot **Marvel Visionaries: Steve Ditko** (various; hbk) Collects Ditko classics – Tales to Astonish #26 and #42; Strange Tales #94, #97, #110, #115, #126, #127 and #146; Amazing Adult Fantasy #7, #10, #12, #13 and #14; Amazing Spider-Man #1, #31-33 and Annual #1; Hulk #6 and #249; Tales of Suspense #48; Daredevil #162; Marvel Super-Heroes Special; and Speedball #1. 336pg $29.99

New Invaders 9 (Allan Jacobsen & C. P. Smith) The Invaders' Deadliest Enemy has returned, and this time he will stop at nothing to destroy them! The Good Guys don't always win! $2.99

New X-Men 12 (Christina Weir + Nunzio DeFilippis & Michael Ryan) A forbidden relationship comes out into the open, with consequences for everyone at Xavier's! Stand-alone issue. $2.99

one-shot **Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe: Spider-Man 2005** (various) Contains in-depth bios on more than 30 of the wisecracking web-slinger's closest allies and most infamous enemies – including the Stacy Twins, fresh from the pages of Amazing Spider-Man, and Toxin. 48pg $3.99

Rogue 10 *(Forget-Me-Not* 4 of 6; Tony Bedard & Karl Moline) Rogue and Sunfire take on Lady Deathstrike! But is she the only one behind their recent problems? $2.99

one-shot **Spider-Man: India** (various) *See Close-Up, above.*

new **Spider-Man: Breakout!** 1 (Tony Bedard & Manuel Garcia) The jailbreak of the century causes more havoc as a flood of the most dangerous villains on the planet pour into the streets of New York City. $2.99

Stormbreaker: The Saga of Beta Ray Bill 4 (Michael Avon Oeming + Dan Berlan & Andrea Di Vito) In a fit of desperation, Stardust took a gamble that unleashed a terrible evil into the universe. An evil so great that it may destroy everything. $2.99

Ultimate Iron Man 2 (Orson Scott Card & Andy Kubert) A child of science and nature, Tony Stark is not like normal kids – he's much more. See the construction of the man and his armour. $2.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 76 *(Hobgoblin* 5 of 6; Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley) Prepare for the battle of Spider-Man and the Hobgoblin. Will either survive this epic encounter? $2.25

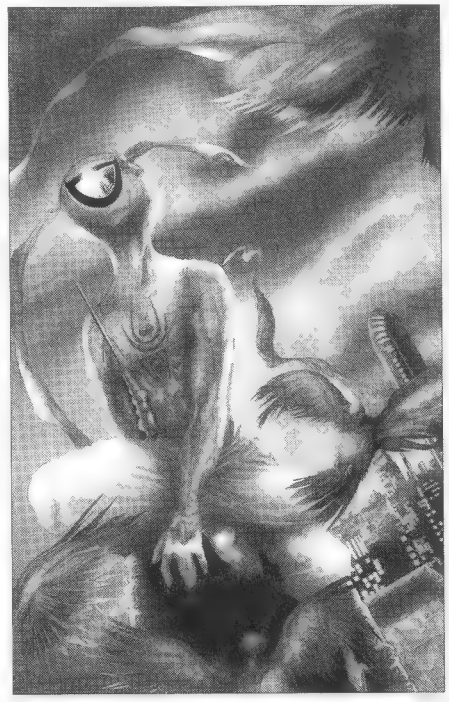
Ultimate X-Men 58 (Brian Vaughan & Stuart Immonen) When a dangerous young mutant immune to psychic control takes Charles Xavier and the rest of a Manhattan bank hostage, the Professor must lead a diverse group of humans in a risky bid to end the siege. $2.25

Uncanny X-Men 458 *(On Ice* 4 of 5; Chris Claremont & Alan Davis) The X-Men's strange new foes are bent on claiming the Earth for their own – and they plan on using the might of the X-Men to do it! $2.25

Wolverine 27 (Mark Millar & John Romita Jr.) Hydra might have lost Wolverine, but two more take his place, and one is a former X-Man who will shock former teammates and readers alike. $2.25

X-23 #5 (Christopher Yost & Billy Tan) The program's horrifying master plan is finally revealed and X-23 is sent on her most vicious mission yet, the ramifications of which will turn the Facility on its head. $2.99

X-Men 169 (Peter Milligan & Salvador Larroca) The strange madness the X-Men discovered in Antarctica has come to the X-Mansion. Are the X-Men prepared to face what's inside them – or will they be defeated by their own inner demons? $2.25



close-up

Spider-Man: India

Marvel Comics

Writer: *Jeevan J. Kang + Suresh Seetharaman + Sharad Devarajan*

Artist: *Jeevan J. Kang*

Spider-Man, re-caste in India. What if the familiar story was about an Indian teen named Pavitr Prabhakar? Witness the rebirth of a legend as young Pavitr learns hard lessons about power and responsibility in an all-new interpretation that has received worldwide media coverage. Collects Spider-Man: India #1-4. 96pg $9.99

ON SALE APRIL 27

ON SALE FROM

APRIL 27

Dark Horse

Concrete: The Human Dilemma 5 (Paul Chadwick) While subjecting himself to a gauntlet of public criticism for Walter Sageman's controversial population-control programme, Concrete's back has gone from causing severe itching to causing nausea and painful swelling. What on earth is happening to his body now? b&w $3.50

Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith 4 (of 4; Miles Lane & Doug Wheatley + Chris Chuckry) The action of the Clone Wars comes to a dramatic conclusion, and events are put in place for A New Hope. $2.99

Star Wars: Republic 76 *(The Siege of Saleucami* 3 of 4; John Ostrander & Jan Duursema + Dan Parsons) Two Jedi heroes have fallen and the Republic forces on Saleucami are on the verge of being overrun by the Separatist's Morgukai clones. $2.99

Super Manga Blast 51 (various) The final Club 9 story arc rolls through a heartbreaking homestretch as Haruo Hattori begins to respond to the three dear friends and suitors who yearn to marry her. 128pg b&w $5.99

DC Comics

Adam Strange 8 (Andy Diggle & Pascal Ferry) The end of Adam's struggle is only the beginning of the greatest threat the universe has ever seen. Get ready for the opening salvos of the Rann/Thanagar War, which continues in a major miniseries later in 2005. ..... $2.99

The Authority: Revolution 7 (Ed Brubaker & Dustin Nguyen + Richard Friend; *WildStorm)* Jenny Quantum is about to discover just how weird being a Jenny really is...and she'll never be the same! $2.99

Batgirl 63 (Andersen Gabrych & Alé Garza + Jesse Delperdang) Batgirl has been a thorn in the Penguin's side since she arrived in Blüdhaven. Now Gotham City's dirtiest bird is bringing in the biggest gun at his disposal to remove her once and for all. $2.50

Batman 639 (Judd Winick & Doug Mahnke + Tom Nguyen) The identity of the Red Hood has been revealed – now a new story arc begins! But what other villains lurk in the Gotham night? $2.25

one-shot **Batman: Scarecrow Tales** (various; tpbk) Featuring eight stories spanning more than 60 years, from World's Finest Comics #3 (1941) to Batman: Gotham Knights #23 (2002). 176pg $19.99

Cartoon Network Block Party 88 (various) The Kids Next Door mobilise against an Earth-freezing menace in *Operation SNOWGLOBE.* $2.25

Catwoman 42 (Matteo Casali & Brad Walker + Jimmy Palmiotti) Catwoman's efforts to stop a serial murderer targeting prostitutes has led her to a Brazilian mobster running illegal dog fights out of the East End. $2.50

new **City of Tomorrow** 1 (of 6; Howard Chaykin & Chaykin; *WildStorm)* Life in Columbia was a dream...for a while. A virus has affected the municipal employees (bio-animatronic robots). They have become criminal masterminds – and they've turned Columbia from an idyllic community into a hellhole of crime and urban blight! $2.99

Doom Patrol 11 (John Byrne & Byrne + Doug Hazlewood) More about Nudge and Grunt's bizarre life together before the Doom Patrol is revealed! $2.50

Elfquest: The Grand Quest Vol 8 (Wendy Pini + Richard Pini & Wendy Pini + Joe Staton) Collects Elfquest: Siege At Blue Mountain #4-6. A Wolfrider child is kidnapped and delivered to Winnowill. 208pg b&w $9.99

The Flash 221 *(Rogue War* 2 of 6; Geoff Johns & Howard Porter + Livesay) The Flash continues his efforts to prevent Captain Cold and his Rogues from tearing apart Chicago. $2.25

one-shot **The Fourth Power** (Juan Gimenez, tpbk) On the war-ravaged planet Alpha Nebulae, a fighter pilot named Mega learns that she's in danger, for there are those who will stop at nothing to control her – to control the Fourth Power. 136pg $14.99

one-shot **Green Arrow: City Walls** (Judd Winick & various; tpbk) Collects Green Arrow #32 and #34-39. Green Arrow must marshal the most unlikely army of all to save Star City – and the world – from a demonic threat. 160pg . $12.99

Hellblazer 207 *(Down in the Ground Where the Dead Men Go* 1 of 6; Mike Carey & Leonardo Manco; *Vertigo)* After another of his blunders proves disastrous for a loved one, John forms an unlikely alliance with the one being who can help him. Can John survive a perilous passage through the outskirts of Hell with this strange guide? . $2.75

Legend 3 (Howard Chaykin & Russ Heath; *WildStorm)* Torn by tragedy, Hugo questions his powers and wonders what his true purpose really is. 48pg .. $5.99

Legion of Super-Heroes 5 (Mark Waid & Barry Kitson + Art Thibert) On the edge of the universe, Lightning Lad and Saturn Girl come across a deadly super-powered team that may be the harbinger of a threat that will being the entire United Planets down. 40pg $2.99

The Losers 23 *(Anti-Heist* 1 of 3; Andy Diggle & Jock; *Vertigo)* In the wake of the biggest corporate fraud since Enron, the Losers become uneasy allies with a man they have little reason to trust. $2.99

new **The Omac Project** 1 (of 6; Greg Rucka & Jesus Saiz) In a world where men can fly and melt metal with their eyes, there's now an army created specifically as an answer to them: a One Man Army Corps. Batman and an old ally are about to learn the chilling truth behind the OMAC Project – but will they work with or against each other? $2.50

Otherworld 2 (Phil Jimenez & Jimenez + Andy Lanning; *Vertigo)* The heroes of Otherworld find themselves at the LaBrea Tar Pits in California. But it's no vacation when they're attacked by a group of cyborgs intent on destroying them. $2.99

Outsiders 23 (Judd Winick & Shawn Moll + Kevin Conrad) The Outsiders are trapped in their own headquarters as they try to uncover the traitor in their midst. What happens when seven trapped super-heroes stop being polite and start getting real? $2.50

The Razor's Edge: Redbird 2 (of 5, Jason Pearson and Ed Brubaker & Pearson; *WildStorm)* Things get more complicated for Redbird as she learns the government has dispatched an assassin to terminate her! $2.99

final issue **Richard Dragon** 12 (Chuck Dixon & Scott McDaniel + Andy Owens) With the lords and minions of Hell looking on, DC's greatest martial artists partake in the ultimate battle: Richard Dragon versus Lady Shiva – to the death! $2.50

one-shot **Robo-Hunter: Day of the Droids** (John Wagner + Alan Grant & Ian Gibson; tpbk) Sam Slade is hired for a strange case by a robotic city councillor who soon turns up dead, and a robot union wants Sam out of business. b&w 160pg $9.99

Sleeper Season Two 11 (Ed Brubaker & Sean Phillips; *WildStorm)* Holden's secret plan is finally put into motion, but the pieces are falling apart all around him. $2.99

Solo 4 (Howard Chaykin) Chaykin revisits the old West in *Tall in the Saddle;* heads to the future in the science-fiction epic *Upgrades;* plays a World War II jazz tune in *The Last Time I Saw Paris;* and shows the terror of urban violence with *Bad Blood.* 48pg $4.99

Superman 216 *(Lightning Strikes* 3 of 3; Judd Winick & Ian Churchill + Norm Rapmund) The great evil turns Superman against Captain Marvel. Can any force on Earth stop this? $2.50

Teen Titans Go! 18 (J. Torres & Todd Nauck + Lary Stucker) The magic imp accidentally frees the super-deformed Titans from the margins of the comic book page and lets them roam free among the real world. $2.25

new **Tenryu: The Dragon Cycle** Vol 1 (Matoh Sanami) A fantasy featuring two sword-packing brothers who must find their father's killer in war-torn ancient China. 200pg b&w $9.99

Vimanarama! 3 (Grant Morrison & Philip Bond; *Vertigo)* Ali is dead and Prince Rama lies powerless, as the fossil devils bent on destroying the world prepare to sink the Continent of America! Can Sofia save the day, or will eternal night fall? 40pg $2.99

Marvel

Araña 4 (Fiona Avery & Roger Cruz) After her disastrous fight with a teen assassin leaves Anya up the creek without a paddle, it's up to Spidey to lend a hand to the new kid in town! ... $2.99

one-shot **Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes** (Joe Casey & Scott Kolins; hbk) This is where the legend began! A look into the early, pivotal period of the Marvel Universe, when five fledgling heroes – Iron Man, Thor, Giant-Man, the Wasp and the Hulk – banded together to fight the foes no single hero could overcome! Collects Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes #1-8. 192pg .. $24.99

one-shot **Black Widow: Homecoming** (Richard K. Morgan & Goran Parlov + Bill Sienkiewicz; tpbk) The deadliest agent in the Marvel Universe has finally gotten out of the spy game, and she's not asking for much, just a life of her own. Collects Black Widow #1-6. 144pg $14.99

final issue **Captain America & The Falcon** 14 (Priest & Dan Jurgens) Distraught over his choices and their deadly consequences, the Falcon has set out to correct his mistakes – starting with recapturing Captain America's Navy counterpart, the so-called Anti-Cap. $2.99

Daredevil 72 (Brian Michael Bendis & Alex Maleev) Exactly how much was Matt Murdock willing to sacrifice in his obsession to clean up Hell's Kitchen? And what does it have to do with a painful family legacy? $2.99

Excalibur 12 (Chris Claremont & Aaron Lopresti) Magneto and Professor X face some tough choices with their charge on Genosha, while Callisto and Archangel face a deadly and familiar adversary – Viper! $2.99

Exiles 63 *(Time Breakers* 2 of 4; Tony Bedard & Mizuki Sakakibara) Who's been pulling the strings all along? And when the heck is Beak going to make himself useful? $2.99

Fantastic Four: Foes 4 (Robert Kirkman & Cliff Rathburn) The Mole Man is back. He's out to get revenge for all the times he's been defeated. Now the Fantastic Four are face to face with one of the most deadly foes of their past, and it's all part of Reed's plan. $2.99

Marvel Adventures Spider-Man 2 *(The Sinister Six* 1 of 2; Erica David & Patrick Scherberger) What separates the supervillains from just plain old villains? When they escape from prison, regular villains might lay low for a while and enjoy the sweet taste of freedom. But not a supervillain like Doctor Octopus – the minute he's free, he's gathering up the most dangerous crew ever assembled: the Vulture, Electro, Kraven the Hunter, Sandman and Mysterio! $2.25

New Avengers 6 (Brian Michael Bendis & David Finch) The New Avengers have gathered to avenge those affected by the wild events of the Breakout. But the questions revealed in this issue will have deep ramifications for the rest of the Marvel Universe. $2.25

Marvel Masterworks: The Amazing Spider-Man Vol 7 (Stan Lee & various) Spidey battles against the likes of the villainous Vulture, Mysterio and Medusa of the Inhumans. Collects Amazing Spider-Man (Vol 1) #62-67, Annual #5 and Spectacular Spider-Man (Magazine) #1-2. 320pg $49.99

Power Pack 2 (Marc Sumerak & Gurihiru) Alex Power has finally scored a date with the girl of his dreams – too bad his parents are making him baby-sit his brother and sisters on the same night! $2.25

Punisher 20 *(Up is Down and Black is White* 2 of 6; Garth Ennis & Leo Fernandez; *Max Comics)* With one unspeakable act, Nicky will go right to the top of Frank's 'to-do' list – and there's nowhere he'd rather be. $2.99

Spectacular Spider-Man 27 (Paul Jenkins & Mark Buckingham) Paul Jenkins wraps up his five-year tenure as a Spider-Man writer and brings Spectacular Spider-Man to a close in a moving, self-contained tale. $2.99

Spellbinders 2 (Mike Carey & Mike Perkins) In a school where witches are a dime a dozen, you'd better find out exactly who your friends are...fast. Kim learns this lesson the hard way as she begins to discover the true nature of her witch-powers, and runs into a crowd of Salem ghosts. $2.99

Ultimate Secret 2 (Warren Ellis & Steve McNiven) Kree soldier Mahr Vehl has abandoned his mission on our planet to prevent mankind's ascension to the stars. And his sudden betrayal may mean a swift doom for the Earth. $2.99

Ultimate Fantastic Four 18 (Warren Ellis & Adam Kubert) The FF have come face-to-face with the remaining inhabitants of the N-Zone. Will they make it through meeting Ultimate Annihilus and his fellow survivors? $2.25

new **Wolverine: Enemy of the State** Vol 1 (Mark Millar & John Romita Jr; tpbk) How does Wolverine end up fighting to destroy everything he holds dear? Get ready for the ride of your life! Collects Wolverine #20-25. 144pg $12.99

Wolverine: Soultaker 3 (Akira Yoshida & Shin Nagasawa) Wolverine discovers the history of the Shoshei Order of Priestesses and the current Priestess Mana. But is it too late to stop the demon-lord Ryuki and his hoard of zombie-samurai and save Japan? $2.99

X-Men: Phoenix – Endsong 5 (Greg Pak & Greg Land) As the power of the Phoenix threatens the very foundations of existence, everything comes down to the choices of one man torn between the two women he loves. $2.99

RELEASED AND ON SALE IN

APRIL

Aardvark-Vanaheim

one-shot **Dave Sim Collected Letters 2004** (Dave Sim; tpbk) "After you've finished writing the longest sustained narrative in human history, it's time to answer the mail." 580pg b&w ... $30.00

Abstract Studios

Strangers in Paradise (Terry Moore) Molly persuades her doctor to sign her release and sets out to find her first love – Benjamin Peters. 24pg b&w .. $2.95

Amaze Ink/ Slave Labor

Next Exit 4 (Christy Lijewski) Markesh and Retrab are thrown into a fight for their lives as their heads become the next ones the chopping block, but when your opponent isn't alive, how do you kill it? 24 pg $2.95

Patty Cake and Friends Vol 2 #14 (Scott Roberts) Terror strikes Katherine Kerr Elementary School when a psychotic new gym teacher arrives. With a fuse as short as a mouse's nose-hair, he turns Physical Education into boot camp. 48 pg $4.95

Pirate Club 6 (Derek Hunter) On their quest to find Mike, the Pirate Club is sidetracked by a pesky new club who transports them into a video game! But who knows how to defeat an end boss in a real life brawl? 24pg . $2.95

one-shot **Punch and Judy** (Chris Reilly & Darron Laessig + Jorge Santillan; tpbk) Absurd delights await you, circling around the age old puppet show. 96pg $7.95

new **Serenity Rose Vol 1: Working Through the Negativity** (Aaron A) Come and stare at Serenity Rose, local witch, as she spends the day dodging goblins, goths, and a bad case of social phobia in the spookiest town in America. Collects the first five issues of this new series. 144pg $12.95

one-shot **Strange Eggs** (Chris Reilly) Telling the stories of Kyle & Kelly Hatcher; a lonely brother and sister who get a Strange Egg delivered to them every week, by the dapper egg deliveryman, Roger Rogers. The eggs hatch into problems that the kids need to solve. Problems like aliens, dinosaurs, crazed ventriloquist dummies and several hobos. 48pg $3.95

Antarctic Press

one-shot **Dragon Arms Standalone Special** (David Hutchinson) Your favourite characters tackle tiny terrors with their miniscule might. b&w . $2.99

Gold Digger 63 (Fred Perry) G'nolga and Gull begin a daring escape from the Stronghold, a mystic temple for training the guardians of Jade and the retreat. $2.99

Heaven Sent 10 (Ben Dunn) Kyle has freed his mother's soul, and now he returns to Earth to lead the forces of Heaven against none other than the Anti-God. b&w $2.99

I Hunt Monsters Vol 2 #4 (Rod Espinosa & Wes Hartman + Craig Babiar) The Fang Tong has been crippled, but their leader, Wei Huang, has had Delilah kidnapped, and his legal connections mean Will and company can't touch him. $2.99

Luftwaffe 1946 Vol 5 #2 (Ted Nomura & various) An alternative Roswell episode involving the Nazis' ultimate Projekt: Saucer. 48pg b&w $5.95

Ninja High School 127 (Fred Perry) Bereaved by her mother's tragic death, Yumei flees Hawaii for the familiar safety of Quagmire and fall into a malicious matrimonial scheme. b&w $2.99

new **Weapons File** 1 (various) Featuring hundreds of pictures of all types of handguns, rifles, shotguns and more in numerous positions. b&w $4.95

Archie Comics

Archie & Friends 91 (Kathleen Webb & Stan Goldberg) When Mr Lodge restores an old mill dating back to the Revolutionary War, old papers are unearthed that suggest a buried treasure in Riverdale! $2.19

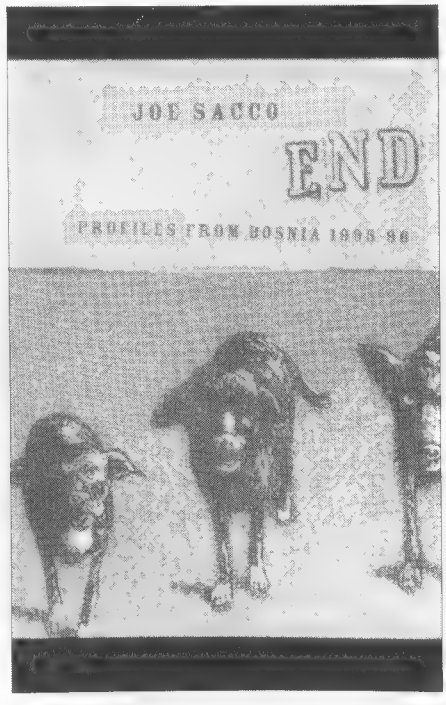
Betty 146 (George Gladir & Stan Goldberg) Betty's new dance partner literally has two left feet, when she enters a dance contest with Jughead's dog, Hot Dog! $2.19

Betty & Veronica 208 (Kathleen Webb & Jeff Shultz) It's a Saturday night and not a single boy has a date... because all of their girlfriends are taking in the latest schmaltzy chick flick at the cinema! $2.19

Sabrina the Teenage Witch 66 (Tania del Rio) Shinji's uncle, a toy designer, thinks Salem is the cat's meow – and before you know it, a new stuffed kitty craze is born! $2.19

Sonic the Hedgehog 148 (various) With the odds stacked against Sonic can even the help of his friends be enough to protect the Blue Blur? $2.19

Veronica 161 (Dan Parent) The doctor thinks the world's most pampered teen is suffering from exhaustion, but she's too busy to realise just how tired she is! $2.19



close-up

War's End: Profiles From Bosnia 1995-96

Drawn & Quarterly

Writer/Artist: Joe Sacco

How does an artist reconcile being forced to go to the front line of a brutal conflict that will change his life and homeland forever? This volume collects for the first time the acclaimed *Soba* and *Christmas with Karadzic*, offering inside stories on central Europe's worst conflict in 50 years. Mature readers. 80pg b&w $14.95

ON SALE APRIL

Avatar

one-shot **Stargate Atlantis Preview** (Stuart Moore & Mauricio Melo) Stationed thousands of light-years from Earth, the team from Stargate Atlantis has a whole new galaxy to explore...but most of those worlds are under siege by the Wraith, an ancient and deadly vampire-race. 16pg b&w $2.50

Robocop: War Party 2 (of 3; Steven Grant & Carlos Ferreira) As Detroit descends into chaos, the Bastion Corporation declares martial war, with citizens as targets and Robocop as public enemy #1. ..... $3.99

one-shot **Brian Pulido's Lady Death: Abandon All Hope** #½ (Brian Pulido & Ron Adrian) Hope has renounced her humanity and she's sentenced to the labyrinth. Now forged into the cold, cruel and alluring warrior Lady Death, she joins forces with the mysterious and deadly Wargoth, and master thief/spell-caster Satasha. 16pg $2.99

Brian Pulido's Medieval Lady Death #3 (Brian Pulido & Di Amorim) Lady Death may have Eldritch abilities, but she has no training in them. Will this cost her life and the lives of her loved ones? $3.99

Bongo Comics

Bart Simpson Comics 23 (various) When Principal Skinner gets wind of a surprise inspection, he is not prepared to pay the price for Bart's best behaviour. $2.99

Simpsons Classics 4 (Matt Groening) Lisa and Otto unwittingly conspire together to form the hottest jazz-fusion band Springfield's ever seen. 64pg $3.99

Simpsons Comics 105 (Boothby & Ortiz) The local Board of Health calls Dr Nick's practice into question, but all is not as it seems, and Dr Nick may have a role to play in the medical establishment. $2.99

Claypool

Deadbeats 71 (various) Dracula's evil five-by-five plan requires that the fifth Deadbeat slaughter his entire family. b&w $2.50

Elvira 144 (various) Elvira's staging three tales; one of publishing, one of celebrity nuptials, plus the conclusion of *The Wedding Hammer*. b&w $2.50

Drawn & Quarterly

Drawn & Quarterly 8 (Joe Sacco & Dan Clowes + Carol Tyler) Sporting a major story by Sacco about his visit to Berlin just after the fall of the big wall they had out there. 40pg $3.75

one-shot **War's End: Profiles from Bosnia 1995-96** (Joe Sacco; tpbk) *See Close-Up, left.*

El Capitan

Stray Bullets 38 (David Lapham) Just when Virginia Applejack has everything under control, new kid Mike Hussey comes to school and a civilised feud of

vandalism, baseball bats and nasty words escalates into something much worse. Mature readers. b&w $3.50

Fantagraphics

new **Bete Noire** 1 (various) New edited collection of exciting art from French artists. Mature readers. 88pg $9.95

The Complete Peanuts Vol 3: 1955-1956 (Charles Schultz) Linus begins to talk, Snoopy begins to explore his eccentricities, and Lucy's crush on Schroeder begins. $28.95

Meat Cake 14 (Dame Darcy) Such delights as the histories of rockstar witches Clara Bow and Cleopatra, tips on how to 'exercise' one's demons, and revolting fairytales. Mature readers. b&w $3.95

one-shot **Outlaws, Rebels, Freethinkers & Pirates** (Bob Levin) Collecting a whole bunch of artists' work that fulfils the titular criteria. 200pg $16.95

one-shot **Seeing Things** (Jim Woodring; hbk) *See Close-Up, right.*

one-shot **Why Do They Kill Me?** (Tim Kreider) Political cartoons, where reality is nightmarish and George W Bush is president. Scary! 136pg b&w .. $14.95

close-up

Seeing Things

Fantagraphics Books

Writer/Artist: Jim Woodring

Collecting crisply-rendered images that reflect Woodring's lifelong obsession with hidden worlds, alternate realities and the inexplicable resonance of the unprecedented and irrational in lucid art. Little collections about frogs sit comfortably alongside those about appalling scenes of sub-rational political activity involving catalytic entities with a high ratio of motivation to altruism. 104pg b&w $22.95

ON SALE APRIL

Image

Armor X #2 (Keith Champagne & Andy Smith) While a police detective with a hidden agenda starts piecing together the story of what happened at the senior prom, Carson Deeds begins to explore the capabilities of his new suit of armour. $2.95

one-shot **The Art of Greg Horn** (Greg Horn) Included here are commercial art projects for industry giants such as Nike, Bacardi, Sony, Ringling Bros, Universal Studios and Allstate Insurance. 144pg $24.95

The Atheist 2 (Phil Hester & John McCrea) The bodies of the living are being hijacked by the restless spirits of the dead and the government has called in Antoine Sharpe to investigate. Driven by rational principles, Sharpe sets out to prove the cases of possession are merely a new disease. b&w $3.50

Battle Hymn 5 (of 5; B. Clay Moore & Jeremy Haun + Dave Bryant) With the team in disarray, the Artificial Man has gone off to kill Hitler and end the war. At the prodding of the government, it's up to the Proud American to stop him by any means necessary. $2.95

Beyond Avalon #2 (Joe Pruett & Goran Sudzuka) Having left the relative safety of the her homeland- the mythical island of Avalon-in search of her father, King Arthur, Megan finds herself in a land unlike anything she ever imagined. $3.50

new **Cholly & Flytrap: The Original Adventures** 1 (of 2; Arthur Suydam) This latest collection of Suydam's ultimate antiheroes, Cholly and Flytrap, opens as the team becomes embroiled in a vicious battle on a stark alien landscape. Who will win? Who will lose? $3.50

one-shot **Darkness/ Vampirella** (Terry Moore & Eric Basaldua + Jay Leisten; *Top Cow)* Jackie and Vampi both stalk the streets of New York, but when their goals run at cross purposes, two tough customers are set at each other's throats! $2.99

The Expatriate 3 (B. Clay Moore & Jason Latour) After working so hard to escape from CIA agents Murphy and Conrad, Jack learns that stopping to catch his breath was a bad idea.$2.95

Freedom Force 4 (of 6; Eric Dieter & Tom Scioli) The headquarters of Earth's greatest heroes becomes the target of Mr Mechanical's marauding Mech-Men. But even as Freedom Force tries to repel the robotic rampage, Mentor's worst fears may be realized when a fleet of Domain warships is detected in high orbit above the Earth. $2.95

The Gift 11 (Raven Gregory & various) When Matthew Lang returns home from work early one day, he finds his wife in bed with another man. Consumed by rage and bearing a newly acquired Gift, he takes his revenge on those who have wronged him. $2.99

one-shot **The Gray Area Vol 1: All of This Can Be Yours** (Glen Brunswick & John Romita, Jr. + Klaus Janson; tpbk) Rudy Chance finds himself in the Gray Area. Here he is forced to combat evil for an afterlife police force in order to gain a shot at redemption. Collects The Gray Area #1-3. 136pg ... $14.95

The Imaginaries 2 (of 4; Ben Avery & Mike S. Miller + Gregory Titus) Superhero G faces his first battle against a swarm of nasty bears in this action packed issue. $2.95

one-shot **Invincible** 0 (Robert Kirkman & Ryan Ottley + Bill Crabtree) What are Mark Grayson's powers? What is his origin? Who is he? Where did he come from? 16pg $0.50

new **Iron Ghost** 1 (Chuck Dixon & Sergio Cariello) With the Third Reich on the brink of collapse, someone is killing German officers and foot soldiers guilty of crimes that would go unpunished. Inspectors Tannhauser and Volz are assigned to find and capture the mysterious vigilante known as the Iron Ghost. $2.95

Jack Staff 9 (Paul Grist) Britain's Greatest Hero, Jack Staff, and Castletown's Cast Iron Champion, Tom Tom the Robot Man, join forces in the hunt for superhero-hating Detective Inspector Maveryk! $3.50

Lions, Tigers & Bears 4 (of 4; Mike Bullock & Jack Lawrence) The Night Pride has been captured by the Beasties, Ares has been left for dead, and Joey is all alone in the Haunted Forest. Will Joey be able to summon the courage to save Courtney and the Pride? $2.95

Lullaby: Wisdom Seeker 3 (of 4; Mike S. Miller & Ben Avery + Hector Sevilla) All roads lead to Oz, but no one ever said it would be easy getting there. Jim Hawkins fights to rescue his friend Pinocchio from the denizens of the World Tree, but he may not like what he finds. $2.95

new **Magdalena vs Dracula: Monster War** 1 (of 4; Chris Golden + Tom Sniegoski & Joyce Chin; *Top Cow)* Seeds are sown when Dracula invades London, and only the Magdalena can stop him! But can Drac turn Maggy into a vampireor will the Tomb Raider be able to stop him? Variant covers. $2.99

one-shot **Mark Waid's Hunter-Killer 1 Scriptbook** (Mark Waid & Marc Silvestri; *Top Cow)* Writer Mark Waid takes you behind the curtain with his original script to Hunter-Killer #1. See the words as they landed on the page and how it lined up with Marc Silvestri's art. 40pg $4.99

Mora 2 (Paul Harmon) Bimonthly. If Mora can survive her encounter with the cursed Owlen-man, she may live long enough to see something truly sinister. b&w $2.95

new **Night Club** 1 (of 4; Mike Baron & Mike Norton) As Boston prepares for the 4th of July, crime is out of control. An eerie army of inhuman creatures threatens anyone who ventures away from well-lit streets. $2.95

Noble Causes 10 (Jay Faerber & Fran Bueno) After a daring escape from a psychiatric hospital, Doc has made his way to Noble Manor, where he intends to defeat Steven Dockerty and reclaim his body. $3.50

PvP 17 (Scott Kurtz) Cole and Brent are trapped inside a comic book shop after hours. Little do they know that the shop has been targeted by cat burglars. b&w $2.95

Raymond E. Feist's The Wood Boy 2 (of 2; Raymond E. Feist + By Sean J Jordan & Mat Broome) Dirk's hard life turns into a nightmare as he wakes up one morning and finds everyone around him dead. The killer has looted the manor and kidnapped Lord Paul's daughter, and the tsunami will likely kill any survivors. . $2.95

one-shot **Rising Stars Hardcover** (J. Michael Straczynski & Keu Cha + Brent Anderson; *Top Cow)* Writer J. Michael Straczynski's superhero tour-de-force is collected, beginning to end, in one volume. Follow the 113 superpowered Pederson Specials as they grow up, live, love, die, and ultimately try to save the world. 624pg $69.99

new **Rising Stars: Voices of the Dead** 1 (of 6; Fiona Avery & Staz Johnson + Wayne Faucher; *Top Cow)* As a direct conduit to the dead, Zerb opens an agency as a Ghost Interpreter, helping people deal with hauntings and other 'spirit' cases. $2.99

Savage Dragon 124 (Erik Larsen) Touched by the notorious Negate, Dragon's powers are slowly diminishing. His immune system in chaos, Dragon faces his toughest opponent and the result is anything but pretty! $2.95

Sea of Red 2 (Rick Remender + Kieron Dwyer & Salgood Sam) Marco's 500-year confinement at the bottom of the sea ends as he is discovered by film director Joel Cameron's submarine on a scouting expedition for his next film. ... $2.95

Small Gods 9 (Jason Rand & Juan E. Ferreyra) Bobby Pope, Lucy Naylor and Melissa Hayes vs. Theodore Irvine and a pack of armed and pissed-off cops! b&w $2.95

one-shot **Ultra: Seven Days** (Joshua Luna & Jonathan Luna) A chance encounter with a mysterious fortune teller prophesises true love for Pearl Penatosa within seven days. Collects Ultra #1-8. 232pg $17.95

The Walking Dead, Vol 3: Safety Behind Bars (Robert Kirkman & Charlie Adlard) This volume follows our band of survivors as they set up a permanent camp inside a prison. Relationships change, characters die, and our team of survivors learn there's something far more deadly than zombies out there. Collects The Walking Dead #13-18. Mature readers. 136pg b&w $12.95

The Walking Dead 19 (Robert Kirkman & Charlie Adlard) The group has a visitor, but is she friend, foe or worse? Where did she come from? How did she survive? Can she be trusted? b&w $2.95

Witchblade 85 *(Witch Hunt* 6 of 6; Ron Marz & Michael Choi + Sal Regla; *Top Cow)* The fate of mankind literally rests in the right hand of Sara Pezzini as she confronts an ancient power that has been summoned from a hellish realm beyond time and space. $2.99

Witchblade Vol 4 *(Love Triangle;* Christina Z. & David Wohl + Randy Green; *Top Cow;* tpbk) Love Triangle collects Witchblade #26-39, featuring the torrid triangle between Witchblade-wielder Sara Pezzini, assassin Ian Nottingham, and supernatural mobster Jackie Estacado. 336pg $24.99

one-shot **Zombie King** (Frank Cho) A new breakthrough in medicine is here. Only one pharmaceutical company has it and only they know the drug's dark secrets and the price of immortality. b&w $2.95

Moonstone

new **Cisco Kid: Gunfire & Brimstone** 1 (Len Kody & Dennis Calero) The Cisko Kid chases the Brujera straight into a trap laid by a Texas ranger and his crafty Indian partner. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

one-shot **Cisco Kid** Vol 1 (Jim Duffy) O'Henry's tragic anti-hero looks for meaning in a squalid life of crime and violence, as the dark secret he harbours eats away at his soul like a demon. 96pg b&w $10.95

Geronimo: Last Apache Warrior 1 (Eric Griffin & Chaz Truag) Geronimo and his outnumbered warriors are ensnared between both the army of Mexico and the United States. b&w $2.95

Kolchak: Tales of Night Stalker 6 (various) The spirit of Imjah Ra continues to plague Carl Kolchak and an LA Museum employee. $3.50

Wyatt Earp: Dodge City 2 (Chuck Dixon & Enrique Villagran) Wyatt and his posse knock Hardesty into gaol for the arson at the whorehouse, making him all the less popular with the strongmen of Dodge City. b&w$2.95

Oni Press

Blue Monday Vol 4: Painted Moon (Chynna Clugston) Recently Bleu's finding herself pent up with a heavy dose of teenage lust. She hits the town for some real boys! Mature readers. $11.95

one-shot **Breakfast After Noon** (Andi Watson; tpbk) Rob and Louise are engaged. But unemployment derails their marriage plans and they have to rethink the direction of their lives Mature readers. 184pg b&w $19.95

one-shot **Killer Princesses** (Gail Simone & Lea Hernandez; tpbk) Faith, Hope and Charity, the girls of the mysterious Sorority, are back in this new collection. Mature readers. 96pg b&w $9.95

Little Star 2 (Andi Watson) When Simon and stay-at-home dad Rob meet up to let the kids play, it makes Simon consider cutting back his hours. b&w $2.99

one-shot **Ojo** (Sam Kieth & Alex Pardee + Chris Wisnia) *See Close-Up, below*

one-shot **Queen and Country Declassified** Vol 2 (Greg Rucka & Rick Burchett) Tom Wallace is frantically investigating the murder of MI6's number two on the eve of the Hong Kong handover to China. Mature readers. b&w $2.99

Sirius

Deadly Vol 3: The Evil Teddy (Voltaire + Neil Gaiman & Roman Dirge) Voltaire's malevolent teddy returns in full force to spread dark waves of huggably gothic evil across the land. Mature readers. 48pg b&w $5.95

Tokyopop

A.I. Love You Vol 8 (various) Get ready for a swinging good time as the web of mystery surrounding Twenty's not-so-sunny past unravels. 248pg $9.99

Battle Royale Vol 12 (various) Sugimura loses his faith in himself when he realises he can't beat Kiriyama. But in the midst of battle, a sudden revelation helps him come close to beating Kiriyama. 216pg . $9.99

Cardcaptor Sakura – 100% Authentic Manga Vol 5 (various) It's time for the school talent show and Sakura's class is putting on Sleeping Beauty. Sakura is cast as the prince and you won't believe who the princess is! 192pg $9.99

Crazy Love Story Vol 3 (various) Hae Jung's hectic life is further complicated by the arrival of her stepmother's daughter, Julie, with whom she's had a rocky past. 208pg $9.99

DearS Vol 2 (various) Can life be any better for Takeya? He's surrounded by three beautiful women: Ren, Myu and Neneko. Unfortunately, some things can be too good to last when a DearS agent arrives to take Ren away as a defective slave. 208pg $9.99

D.N.Angel Vol 7 (various) Things go from bad to worse when Daisuke is taken away by Time's Second-Hand, which Dark failed to steal. 176pg $9.99

Doll Vol 4 (various) A doll gives a pregnant woman a lesson in motherhood; a remodeller redesigns dolls by request; a manager replaces workers with dolls; and a lonely disposal man learns the value of life from a doll. 192pg $9.99

Dream Saga Vol 4 (various) The fate of the two worlds is at stake, and Yuuki is the only one that can save both worlds! 208pg $9.99

Eternity Vol 4 (various) Jangbang has fallen in love, but he might be sleeping with the enemy without even knowing it! 160pg $9.99

Fruits Basket Vol 8 (various) Summer is on its way, so of course Tohru and friends are excited about the upcoming vacation and field trip. But what's that sound? It's Hatsuharu going berserk in the classroom – again! 208pg ... $9.99

GetBackers Vol 8 (various) Just as MakubeX predicted, all the players have assembled at the underground base for a final cataclysmic clash. 200pg $9.99

Gravitation Vol 11 (various) Shuichi keeps digging himself deeper into the hole – the plans to release 5 singles in 3 weeks have been bumped up to 10 singles! 192pg $9.99

new **G Veda** Vol 1 (various) At the dawn of creation, Taishakuten rebelled against the Emperor, and a turbulent age began. 300 years later, the Guardian Warrior of the northland (Yasha, the King of his tribe), hears astrologer Kuyou's last prediction: "Six stars will strike the earth. You're the dark star that goes against heaven. Your journey begins when you find the child of a vanished race. I cannot see if the child is good or evil, but I know only this child can spin the wheel of heaven's destiny 208pg $9.99

Hyper Rune Vol 3 (various) Emperor Gald has been reborn! Akira goes missing! At the same time, someone is hacking into Masato's computer...but why? 192pg $9.99

Immortal Rain Vol 5 (various) It's been a long and lonely road for Machika as she searches for Rain. Totally down on her luck and running out of options, friends pop up in the most unlikely of places. 216pg $9.99

new **In Dream World** Vol 1 (various) Drake comes across Hanee, finding her unconscious on a desert road. He takes her to his friend Ed, who nurses her back to health, and when she learns of his journey she begs him till he agrees to take her along. 192pg ... $9.99

The Kindaichi Case Files: Kindaichi the Killer 2 (various) Hajime Kindaichi fights to solve the mystery of his life, and it might just cost him his life. As the primary suspect, Hajime will not only need to crack this case on his feet but also on the run. 168pg $9.99

King of Hell Vol 9 (various) As the travelling trio dig deeper into Devil Mountain, the fearsome demon hunter, Chung Myung Huk Soo, reveals there's one thing that he is afraid of: bugs! 192pg $9.99

Lizzie McGuire Cine-Manga Vol 11: In Miranda, Lizzie Does Not Trust & The Longest Yard (various) Lizzie must learn a difficult lesson: trust. Her friends have been there to catch her when she falls, but will Lizzie return the favour? 96pg $7.99

Mink Vol 6 (various) Cyber Security has caught Kyo, and with him Mink and her friends, for the illegal use of the Wanna-Be program. 184pg $9.99

One Vol 7 (various) Everybody loves Eumpa! On an outing together, Sonia takes a couple of pictures, one of Eumpa with Youngju, and one of Eumpa with Jenny. The next day, splashed across the front page of Music Love is the picture of Eumpa and Jenny, creating a huge scandal! 192pg $9.99

Peach Girl Authentic Vol 4 (various) Sae's true colours are exposed! Now Toji and Momo can live happily ever after... but is that really how the story ends? 192pg $9.99

Phd: Phantasy Degree Vol 2 (various) The battle continues and the body count rises as the Madosa Guild attempts to seal the doors to all the Mahgaes. 192pg $9.99

Planet Blood Vol 2 (various) Noodles and his band of fighters are intent on taking back the Horai kingdoms of Gaia and Pratria from his twin brother overlord Zetsos. 200pg $9.99

Rebound Vol 13 (various) When a mysterious girl named Risa shows up at Three Slam, Scratch ends up having to play a basketball rope match to keep her brother from dragging her back to Akihabara. 192pg $9.99

Remote Vol 5 (various) Kurumi's fiance Shingo is now the suspect of a murder case, and she must turn to Inspector Himuro to help clear Shingo's name, as only he is smart enough to figure out the true identity of the person who killed the stalker. 216pg $9.99

new **Sokora Refugees** Vol 1 (various) When a new boy in class conjures up a portal in the girls' shower, Kana is transported to the magical world of Sokora – wearing nothing but a small cotton robe. 192pg $9.99

Soul to Seoul Vol 2 (various) As agreed, Kai kills the Chinese gang leader on his wedding day, and this is his first time killing a person. 200pg $9.99

one-shot **Spongebob Squarepants, The Movie** (various) Someone has stolen King Neptune's crown! When all signs point to Mr Krabs being the thief, SpongeBob and Patrick set off on a wild journey to the forbidden Shell City to find the royal headgear, Mr Krabs' innocence. 96pg $7.99

one-shot **Spongebob Squarepants: Spongebob Saves the Day** (various; graphic novel) Bikini Bottom gets more than it bargained for when SpongeBob bares his backside at the beach! 96pg $7.99

That's So Raven Vol 3: Smother Dearest (various) Raven's got her hands full juggling 'quality time' with her mother and trying to get to know a cute guy at school better 96pg $7.99

Tokyo Tribes Vol 3 (various) As the rivalry between Mera and Kai rages on, Kai runs into trouble on the home front – and on the homeboy front. 192pg $9.99

new **Visitor** Vol 1 (various) Everyone Hyo-Bin has ever been close to has been brutally murdered! Her horrifying reality is seeping into her nightmares, where classmates from her new school mysteriously appear. 184pg $9.99

UK Newsstand

DC Thomson

The Beano 3248-3251 (weekly; various) Classic kids humour anthology featuring Dennis the Menace, the Bash Street Kids, and all your favourites. £0.55

Beano Superstars 158 (various) One complete strip of the long-running humour anthology. 36pg £0.65

Classics from the Comics 104 (various) Anthology reprinting classic cartoon strips from DC Thomson's ' Beano and Dandy 68pg b&w £1.20

Commando Action and Adventure Stories 3757-3765 (eight per month; digest; various) Featuring one self-contained comic strip per issue. Some new material. 68pg b&w £1.00

The Dandy 3278-3281 (weekly; various) Classic kids humour anthology featuring Desperate Dan, Korky the Cat, and all your favourites. £0.55

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Comment

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Comment is a forum to enable fans and professionals alike to express their personal points of view on aspects of the comics industry. As such, the following opinions do not necessarily reflect those of this publication, but space will be given in subsequent issues to well-reasoned opposing views. Submissions are edited only for grammar, clarity and brevity.

Veni, vidi, definitely not vici

Comment by J.C. Lebourdais via e-mail: Scarce@jclebourdais.com

NOW this is about being spleen. The spleen of being part of the comicbook fan press at the world's largest comics convention. Or should I say festival? You guessed it, I do not mean San Diego, which is only the second largest. I mean Angoulême, this medieval middle-sized town in Charente, France (four times the attendance of San Diego, but that's not the point).

OK, I'm gonna describe it the Sofia Petrillo way: picture this, Angoulême, last week of January, 2005. This is the big one, with most major (and independent) publishers from all over the world involved, their pools of artists signing and sketching by the truck-load, collectable and memorabilia sellers, and of course fan press.

Most of them in three huge circus-like tents. Yes, this is a Barnum, of overwhelming proportions at that.

Lots of big shots from overseas, from Joe Quesada to Alex Ross, Art Spiegelman to David Lloyd, and many others that I'll fail to mention. All of them are here for the sake of art, absolutely not for cuisine, fine alcohols and French women (who don't get fat, as everyone knows).

Now let's concentrate on tent three; this is one big alley, several hundred meters long, with booths facing booths and the audience caught in the middle, forced to turn around and walk back to the entrance to exit the place.

The first section (about one third of the total length) of the tent is devoted to posters, artwork, statues and toy sellers. The most noble officers, I mean, since that's where the money is.

Then the visitors can access the second part, occupied by used and collectable book stores (mostly from Belgium; this is Europe after all, but that's not the point). Like the clergymen of our little comicbook universe, they sometimes let us commune with the holy relics from happier times.

And then what we could call the third state, the fan press, recently rechristened 'alternative comics', just so they don't feel like third-rate citizens. Fat chance. What is the fan press influenced by these days in Europe? Well, American comics and mangas mostly; new trends, whatever. All sorts of nasty influences, if you listen to officials and parents, bred with Tintin and Spirou in their tender years.

As one of those lost souls, here I am, trying to grab a slim piece of the cake for the non-profit magazine **Scarce** (fanzine about US comics, by the way, which is probably why we never received any kind of award in our 20+ years of existence; but that's not the point).

Basically this is a three-level society, just like before we French decided to permanently remove our sovereigns' heads for freedom and equity's sake. The more things change, the more they remain the same.

This festival lasts from Thursday to Sunday. As time goes by, you can actually see the crowd growing, anxious to get a piece of the fame they will be able to cutoff and resell on eBay for an indecent price (but that's not the point).

What happens next? People tend to go for what they know, and leave when they are satisfied. Instant gratification. No chance of discovering something new and potentially exciting. Eventually, the first half of the tent is buzzing like a beehive when the second half hardly sees one quarter of that overall attendance.

Now, I have to confess that I forgot to mention that we French have this one weakness to consider, that all things cultural (including comicbooks) are not like any other products, not subject to offer, demand and other miscellaneous market laws. Obviously this is not easy to maintain when books (or comicbooks) threaten to go the way of McDonald's or Nike's.

What I mean is that we're supposed to put a certain pride in not letting money get in the way of Culture (or cheese, wine and foie gras, but that's not the point). Culture with a capital 'C'.

As Dustin Hoffmann would put it: "Uh-oh!". That's theory. Reality can be a bit different. Take money, mix it with local politics. All this behind the curtain of respectability (and, dare I say it, education) and this is what you get. Fan press as the cultural alibi to the lowest form of greed.

Oh, and funny coincidence: the fan press is separated from the rest

of the lot by another insignificant detail – at this precise location, the classy grey rug turns into a petrol-blue rug. Indeed, a detail.

THAT is the point. To me this is segregation. Bloody stinkin' segregation. Blue carpet, eh!

What next? A yellow badge on our chest? I wonder what Art Spiegelman would say about that? (Actually, I can name at least one European comics convention which already does these things in different colors).

Now, think again, Mr Powers-That-Be. Just imagine that tomorrow's big names are here now, in the fan press. Remember Robert Crumb, Harvey Pekar or Marjane Satrapi? Remember where Jim Lee started? Please do. And now weep.

Heck, what am I thinking? Who am I to even imagine I can change the immovable order of things, carved in stone until judgement day.

Now that it's over, this just leaves a bad taste. And I didn't even mention the state of the site's lavatories. Well, hum. Can someone point me to a good mouthwash?

Oh, just one last thing. That one tent is nicknamed "New York". Can you believe it?

CI: a cheap messaging service

Comment by Mike Breen, Walpole Road, Bournemouth

AS **CI** is so many things to so many people, I'm sure you will forgive me the liberty of using it as a cheap messaging service.

To Brian Michael Bendis:

I'm not convinced that your idea of replacing the JLA's mainstay heroes with second-string characters such as Gypsy, Vibe and Jessica Drew is an entirely workable notion. It would perhaps have been more honest to create a new title so that these dull characters might stand on their own merit, rather than destroying the contiunuity of an established title as you have done.

To Andy Shmuck, associate editor, **The New Avengers**:

You have been an irritating little tick since you first appeared in early **Captain Marvel** letters pages. The letters page is a forum for readers' opinions, *not* a platform for you to try to look clever (something of a lost cause in any event). Please do the world a favour and shut the fuck up!

To the slavering fanboys:

If Brian "emperor's new clothes" Michael "darling of the fan press" Bendis is deserving of all the hype, why has it taken him over 40 pages to have Electro start to break bad guys out of prison, when an identical situation was established and resolved (to much greater effect) in only 10 pages of Electro's first appearance 40 years ago in **Spider-Man** 9?

To everyone who voted:

I can now announce the winner of the John Byrne Memorial Bastardisation of Continuity Award, to decide which character's history and credibility was most damaged in **Avengers** #500-503: it was, in fact, not the Scarlet Witch (or any of the Avengers, although they were all strong contenders) but... Doctor Strange!

For a noted medical practitioner (who is also the Marvel Universe's foremost master of the mystic arts) to nurse a pregnant woman to term and deliver twins without noticing that they were just made-up, wish-fulfilment babies and to then fail, in all his subsequent meetings with Wanda or the other Avengers to enquire after the babies' health and, finally, to lecture the Avengers with trite drivel like "Does anything I have described NOT sound like Wanda Maximoff?" (Avengers in unision: "Well, all of it, actually, you pompous twat!") defies even the suspension-of-disbelief normally required for this medium.

Oh well, at least Hawkeye has been so grossly mischaracterised by every writer since Kurt Busiek it will be easy enough to establish that it was a skrull imposter who died in **Avengers** #502.

Roll on the next relaunch!

Sharing space with the Master

Tribute by Chris Ryall, editor-in-chief at IDW Publishing

I BEGAN working in comics professionally only in the summer of 2004. I'd long been a fan of Will Esiner's works, to be sure, although not as long as I should've been. It was only through the reprints of all of Will's works in the '90s that I came to know and appreciate the genius that was his work, the legacy that he was leaving, and the industry he'd helped build.

It's the way everyone should get to know Will - through his work.

The same week I started on the job as editor-in-chief at IDW Publishing, I sat on a panel with Will. I'd met him at other conventions in the past, and shared a brief word or two – Will could somehow sit on seemingly every panel at the San Diego Comic Con and still never fail to have time to share a word with a fan – but I'd never sat with him in a professional capacity before.

Through the work of Gary Chaloner, as well as outgoing E-I-C

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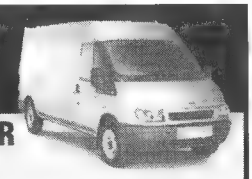
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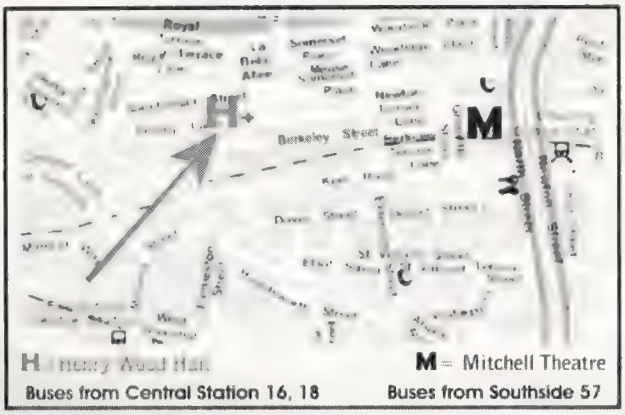

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Jeff Mariotte and everyone at IDW, a book collecting Will's old 1940s character John Law was being assembled. John Law was maybe the least-known work of Will's, and we had a panel to discuss the book. Will didn't need to sit in – his work on the book was completed over a half-century ago – but he did because he loved comics, and he loved his fans.

And he was gracious, funny and uplifting throughout. I co-moderated the panel and got to talk to Will at length. Not many people working in any other industry are able to talk to and learn from the person who effectively started that industry. We can – comics before Will Eisner, well, *weren't*.

When Will first passed, I was struck by two thoughts: one that I'm happy and honoured, no matter what else happens during my tenure in comics, to have my name forever in the credits of one of Will's books.

I started to tell myself that this could very easily be the highlight of my comics career, but there's no way I'd be following Will's example if I didn't strive to do better every year hence.

If he could produce such solid work into his late 80s (really, how many of you heard the news of Will passing at 87 and thought, as I did, that he left us in his prime?) then I could always work a bit harder myself.

The other thought I was struck by was that, as glad as I am to have had a chance to know the man himself a bit, I'm even happier that I've got to know his works. I'd encourage everyone who hasn't yet experienced the grandeur of a Will Eisner comic to do the same.

You'll see in each book the potential this industry has to offer.

Further tributes to Will Eisner

Tribute by Ron Garney, artist Justice League of America

IT'S hard to put into words the influence Will Eisner had on our industry, and if he were alive I'm sure he'd show me exactly how to do it brilliantly in strip form.

How many times I can remember late at night in my studio trying to meet a deadline, referring to **The Spirit** or anything Eisner in order to get me over a storytelling hump.

Before I knew it an hour had passed just from the joy of escaping into Will's wonderful work. It's a task just to put it away and get back to work and I suspect it will always be that way, for me at least.

The man was a well from which the concept and science and art of linear and non-linear storytelling, timing, pacing, settings, characterisation and technique all were drawn from by just about every artist working in the medium now, or at one time or another.

I was nominated for his award in 1996. I didn't win, but the person who did stated on the podium that we all should take advantage of Will's wisdom in our field, while a guy like him is still around to learn from. Truly an uncomfortable moment to be sure as Will was standing right behind him. But in talking with the recipient later, my point to this guy was that even if any one of us never had the luxury of talking to him personally, we still have the luxury of learning from everything he put down on paper, and that will transcend our lifetimes, and artists of all genres will learn from, hopefully, in generations past ours.

Tribute by Jean-Marc and Randy Lofficier

THE personal relationship that we had with Will and Ann Eisner (whom we considered as virtually our third set of parents) was/is too private to lend itself to the kind of comments which often seem (to me, at least) to be a little too glib, and where one always ends up talking too much about oneself.

I would, however, like to quote French poet Sully Prudhomme, who wrote:
C'est aux premiers regards portés
En famille autour de la table
Sur les sièges les plus écartés
Que se fait l'adieu véritable.

My translation: "It's at the first glances / Cast by the family around the table / Towards the empty chairs / That is said the true good-bye."

Tribute by Michael Uslan, Branded Entertainment

IN ALL honesty, I think I've been in denial for the past month.

It's so simple just to say that what Orson Welles and Alfred Hitchcock and Frank Capra were to cinema, Will Eisner was to the medium of comics. He invented new graphic devices to tell a story and invented a new language that would ultimately define good comics. More than that, if we accept that comics, like jazz music, is an indigenous American art form, Will Eisner elevated it. Is he also then the Miles Davis of comicbooks? Maybe he's exactly that.

Since 1940, The Spirit has lived through Will Eisner. Now, Will Eisner will live on through The Spirit.

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Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

The mild-mannered creator of the Internet's original comics industry rumour and news column has outraged many a publisher and survived more than one change of website. Despite several attempts to stop it, the Squiddy Award-winning gutterpress site continues to thrive, with over 20,000 hits a week at its home of www.comicbookresources.com

From his unique vantage point, Rich often scoops the industry newshounds with his stories. Here are the highlights from this month's Gutter...

THEY'RE ONLY COMICS, FOLKS

Michael Moorcock has recently created a bible for the higher ups at DC on how magic works in the DC Universe.

I understand it will have major influence on the recently-announced-but-LITG-rumoured-a-few-months-ago series *Day of Vengeance* (which probably means *Villains United* is just round the corner). I'm starting to hear that *DC Countdown* and the resulting *Crisis II* project may have major Moorcock input.

Time for a new multiverse anyone?

FINDING THE DREAM

Diamond's almost unique decision not to cancel the ordered Dreamwave **Transformers** books, but keep them active for the next publisher to use without starting solicitations from scratch is due to a very hands on approach from Hasbro.

Expect the next publisher to have to deal with that kind of thing a lot.

IF WHAT?

The delay of the recent Marvel **What If** parody comic, **Wha Huh?**, being pushed back even further and removed from the upcoming **What If** trade paperback is a popular subject right now.

But, despite Brian Bendis's hope that this will be resolved, I have been told that there is no likelihood of the book coming out at all, while current legal and content concern opinion remains.

Some have speculated the delay involves the section *What If Identity Crisis Happened In The Marvel Universe*. I understand that Marvel representatives initially cleared parodies of work with the original creators. But who knows what DC legal might have to say if given the chance?

It appears this is just one example of the continuing Marvel and DC tussle. Certainly J. Michael Straczynski's recent in-joke in the pages of **Amazing Spider-Man**, attacking DC Comics, caused some critical comment on the message boards. But Joe gives the lines some context in a post to rec.arts.babylon5.moderated where he puts it down to DC's decision not to retract Bob Wayne's statements that Joe Quesada should be fired from Marvel before the two companies can work together on a crossover project.

Some people had speculated that the frosty relationship between DC and Marvel had been slightly thawing of late. It hasn't.

STILL DREAMING

So how much did DreamWave staffers know about the ongoing financial situation of the company before it closed its doors? One tells me the financial state of the company was kept a secret from employees, and most only learned of the significant creator debts after the company went belly up.

But for the last four months of operation however, a lot of DreamWave's resources were used to concentrate on Dream Engine projects. This new debt-free company

continued on next page...

Networks

Comics news and gossip on the Internet

Compiled by Chris Rice and his team of Netmites

Net sightings

Wha Huh?

Marvel's recent fifth week event, What If? *shipped at the end of December with the exception of* ***Wha Huh?****, a parody book put together by many of Marvel's top creative talent.*

A week or two after the missed ship date, Marvel announced its content would not be appearing in the collected What If? *trade paperback, and the standalone comic would not ship until March, all stated with no explanation for the delay.*

Brian Bendis posted on the Image message boards, on a thread about Marvel's late books that it had no ship date for legal reasons concluding: Hopefully it will be resolved very soon.

However, it's now rumoured that the book will never be coming out, with speculation that the problem story is an announced Identity Crisis parody, set in the Marvel Universe. With the current decidedly chilly climate between Marvel and DC, it would appear that the lawyers at Marvel aren't willing to risk it.

It seems a shame that parody seems to be such a potentially litigious subject at the moment. Alongside the recent seizure by Canadian customs of a Peter Kuper comic that parodied Richie Rich, the lines of free speech in the US seem to be narrowing.

Messner-Loebs

Networks *has touched on the sad misfortunes of 55-year old writer/artist Bill Messner-Loebs in the past, but a recent article on the Detroit News website <www.detnews.com> has brought his plight to the online comics community, igniting an outpouring of sympathy and help for one of their more unfortunate fellows.*

For those unfamiliar with his sad tale, Networks *is running an edited version of the Detroit News story:* During the past several years, Bill Messner-Loebs has been in a car accident, lost his house, had his mobile home stolen and been unemployed.

Any one of the misfortunes would send a lesser man spinning out of control, but Messner-Loebs learned at an early age to let things roll off his back. He was born with a cancerous tumor on his right arm, which had to be amputated while he was still an infant.

As a youngster, Messner-Loebs started doodling, which took on more artistic forms.

Bill Messner-Loebs' magnum opus, ***Journey****, his tale of 19th century frontiersman Wolverine McAlistaire. After 14 issues from Aardvark-Vanaheim (1983-4), it transferred to Fantagraphics for 13 more issues. With only two issues published, his sequel,* ***Journey: Wardrums****, like his Eisner-esque Image title* ***Bliss Alley****, remains unfinished.*

Eventually, he got jobs working as an illustrator for mainstream publishers of comic books such as **Johnny Quest, Batman, Flash, The Maxx, Thor** and **Wonder Woman**. As a result, Messner-Loebs amassed a comic book fan following. His fans supported him morally and financially when his world fell apart.

In mid-2001, Messner-Loebs was driving his Dodge minivan on his way to pick up his wife, Nadine. He misjudged a left turn, and turned too soon. All he could remember was being hit, totaling his vehicle and seeing five cars scatter like bowling pins.

On Sept 10, 2001, Messner-Loebs lost his house in Pinckney when he couldn't keep up the mortgage payments. Messner-Loebs said his money was used to pay medical bills for his late mother and Nadine. Nadine's skull was fractured when she was mugged 30 years ago. There was some brain damage, resulting in migraines, vertigo and food sensitivities.

Neither Messner-Loebs nor his wife receives disability payments.

To make matters worse, when he lost the house, Messner-Loebs was not working. "I thought I'd be getting a job any day, but it didn't work out," he said. His last comic book work was in early 2000.

He speculated that he hasn't gotten work because of leadership changes at Marvel and DC Comics. But some fans learned about Messner-Loebs' plight and sent him some money and he received a small inheritance when his mother died.

The couple bought a mobile home in 2002. However, the mobile home was full of mold, and the man who sold it to him wouldn't take it back. Several months later, the mobile home was stolen.

Ever since, Messner-Loebs and his wife have lived in a small hotel in Howell, but spend a lot of their time at the Brighton Senior Center.

Finding steady work has been hard. Messner-Loebs and his wife have worked as enumerators for the U.S. Census Bureau. For a time, he worked at a library and as a pizza deliveryman. He applied to temporary services, but was never called back.

Despite it all, Messner-Loebs is a survivor. "I'm still here. I'm still warm and dry and safe. The car's still going," he said. "After a while you learn being angry and bitter and saying 'Why me?' all the time only makes you feel worse. It's better to laugh."

The story was picked up online, and quickly spread across the message boards, particularly Geoff Johns and Mark Millar's.

Identity Crisis writer Brad Meltzer had brought it to Millar's attention and they're talking to their respective publishers to try and get some work for Bill.

An online petition has been set up supporting that, and has passed a thousand signatures already. In addition a host of online auctions are being held to benefit the couple, with a dozen or so artists donating original art.

Just in the last day, Pamela Jarvinen, wife of penciller Kirk Jarvinen, posted on the Millarworld thread: Kirk and Bill Loebs are very good friends. We actually live within a mile of Bill and Nadine. Kirk just spoke to Bill and he said he was really unaware

that any of this had been going on, but he'd received some interesting emails from fans around the world recently, including one from Spain, so he wondered why. Since this story broke, Bill has received an offer from a fan, to build a website for him. He has also received a possible offer to be a 'polish writer' for a television/movie script.

Best known for his scripting, Messner-Loebs also drew the story of Wolverine McAlistaire

The one thing that would likely offer him the longest lasting support would be a comic book assignment. If you have not already signed the petition, I support it, and suggest it. If you have more time, write a couple of the big three comic book publishers letting them know your feelings about Bill's work. If they see first hand the outpouring of fan support, they may be moved to offer him work.

Bill would never ask any of you to do any of this. He is a happy man with a good heart and rarely lets anything get him down, but his time is now. I would do this, not because of his financial concerns, but because he is a talented artist/writer who has given us all great memories for our livelihood – comics.

Thank you all from Bill.

Networks has to agree with all of Pamela's sentiments. William Messner-Loebs is a great writer, his runs on ***Flash*** *and* ***Wonder Woman*** *still shape both books today. The petition is at: www.petitiononline.com/LHelpBil/petition.html*

A 400-copy benefit book for Bill is currently in production from Aardwolf Publishing, ***The Three Tenors: Offkey****. Alongside Messner-Loebs, its nine-story content features the work of Dave Cockrum and Clifford Meth.*

Priced $14.95, check out the publisher's website to order: www.aardwolfpublishing.com

IDW luvs Diamond UK

GRIMJACK reviver IDW Publishing and Diamond UK have just signed an exclusive distribution deal for the UK.

Not a massively exciting story, so at online news site The Beat <www.comicon.com/thebeat> Heidi MacDonald decided to report the story in the style of The Onion, provoking fits of giggles in the Networks office: A whirlwind romance has sprung up between IDW and Diamond UK.

"They met at a marketing conference, and you could see sparks flying right away," said one source close to the happy pair.

"There were a lot of lingering glances, and before the end of the evening, they were holding hands!"

According to sources, the relationship has included several dinner dates, and at least one weekend getaway to Ibiza. "I've never seen IDW happier," confides one pal. "Even when *30 Days of Night* got optioned by Sam Raimi.

Diamond UK has everything IDW ever wanted in a British distributor, and both of them have this happy glow around them. It's as if they're walking on air."

Since the relationship started, Diamond UK has been spotted staring absently into space and smiling for no reason at all, friends reveal.

Friends say they think the relationship has a great chance at success. "They have signed an agreement and everything!"

Let's hope the pair make it a lasting relationship, with a few IDW minis soon to follow.

Chris Bunting's COMICS WEBWORLD

Publishers: Part 2. Having been a regular Net user since 1997, I've seen a remarkable amount of change in a relatively short space of time. This includes a change in attitudes toward websites, with very few companies now not owning one. So, to continue where I left off last issue, here are some online offices of comic book publishers…

ASPEN COMICS **www.aspencomics.com**

Hot new thing, Aspen Comics was founded in 2003 by artist Michael Turner. Very impressively, it already has the big sellers Fathom and Soulfire to its name, and a Fathom movie is in development with James Cameron attached. This site carries news, previews, wallpapers and even fan art, and although it's a little slow to load, the exclusive editions and prints will make the wait more than worth it. **7**

AVATAR PRESS **www.avatarpress.com**

Avatar is the publisher of such titles as Robocop, Lady Death and Stargate SG-1, and an impressive line-up of creators including Alan Moore, Garth Ennis, Mark Millar and Warren Ellis. While there's no faulting all these names, the site itself feels a bit tired and in need of a revamp. Yes, it certainly looks professional and serves its purpose, it's just that nothing really jumps out and grabs you. **7**

CLAYPOOL COMICS **www.claypoolcomics.com**

Although you can be forgiven for never having heard of it due to its minimal presence in the UK, Claypool has in fact been a player on the comic scene for quite some time, George Perez, Steve Englehart, Kurt Busiek having worked for it. Some additional website sections (background, interviews) would be of benefit here, but most astoundingly, the creator's links page is missing a link to the person who has to be the publisher's biggest draw. Soulsearchers & Company writer Peter David. **6**

ONI PRESS **www.onipress.com**

I've always liked Oni's website, not because there's anything particularly outstanding or unusual on it, but more because it makes the best of what it has got, and the blue and white colour code really brings a sense of the lively to it. And if you're after Paul Dini's Jingle Belle or Mike Allred's Madman, then the store is just the place for you! **7**

PENNY-FARTHING PRESS **www.pfpress.com**

With such strong titles as The Victorian, Captain Gravity, and Decoy, and such creators as Howard Chaykin, Len Wein and Stuart Moore, a strong site is therefore called for, and this doesn't disappoint. With news, a shop, gallery and downloads, the most remarkable thing that I discovered was that this Texas-based publisher was featured in a US sitcom! **8**

PULP THEATRE ENTERTAINMENT **www.pulptheatre.com**

What do Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles creator Kevin Eastman and I have in common? We're both big fans of PTE's headlining comic, Brodie's Law. This London publisher was founded in 2000, and already has produced an animated video for Babylon Zoo, as well as the aforementioned title, with lots more planned too it seems. The site needs updating, but it's always a positive sign when it hasn't been … it means that the publisher is too busy, and that can only be a good thing. **7**

Honourable mention: **ABLAZE MEDIA [www.tozzer.com]**

Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

continued from previous page...

is also the new credited studio for the money-making **X4** series from Marvel.

EX X-EXPLOSION

One of Marvel's stated aims is to reduce its mutant population drastically, back to the "a few special people" days of early **X-Men**, rather than the current "everyone and his second cousin". So, mass mutant death ahoy.

HIDDEN SECRETS

Iron Man is going to be late.

An industry janitor has been onto me with a few papers he came across while sweeping up shredded copies of **Identity Crisis** 7.

Iron Man #4, being solicited in January's **Previews**, has been delayed until July 20th.

However, unlike other similar delays recently, Marvel and Diamond employees were suddenly instructed not to publish, email or communicate with anyone, including retailers, about this delay. Like they won't notice? This is a delay that will mean a three-month gap between the already late #3 and #4.

It's likely this is because the schedule isn't fixed. So that it gives the creative team flexibility. And may well be tightened up in the future.

But it's also possible the news is being kept secret because retailers often believe late books lose sales.

WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD

I understand that Stephanie Fierman, new Senior Vice President of Marketing, has already made her mark at DC and ructions are being felt.

Details are on the scatty side and the only one that I've had flagged specifically so far is her questioning certain DC people about "working from home". While this is common practice at DC for employees who are sick or on vacation, to keep in touch with the company's operations, some have claimed that this system has been abused.

Fierman's appointment as Senior VP caused an immediate problem for one individual. Some retailers believed she'd taken current Marketing VP Bob Wayne's job, rather than been appointed as his immediate superior, and began contacting ex-retailer Bob to check that he was okay.

This has been seen as the reason why Bob Wayne was so visible in the recent Newsarama interview with Fierman, if only to placate concerns by visibly and demonstrably showing his presence with Fierman and in control of the direct marketing wing.

One person who used to work for Fierman told me "She's smart, she's a leader and she'll shake things up. People like working for her because she's supportive and protective – unless you act like an asshole and get in her way."

CIGARETTES AND GUM

There now follows spoilers for the end of "Constantine," based on the recent DC comic adaptation. I wouldn't normally do this but Bloody Hell. For those squeamish about how Hollywood can transform comics into movies, please look away now.

Hellblazer readers will be familiar with the end of *Dangerous Habits* when, after forcing the demons of hell to cure his cancer rather than tear Hell apart fighting over his soul, John Constantine lights up a cigarette.

In the movie, however, he spurns his cigarette after his cure and goes for some chewing gum instead. See? He's learnt his lesson.

Sorry to do that to you. Now let the weeping and gnashing of teeth commence.

Reviews

*Because few retailers allow titles to be read before purchase, **CI**'s comprehensive reviews section enables comics readers to keep abreast of the wide range of titles currently being published and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section is of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a title after purchase.*

***Review codes:** Individual titles are judged against all similar comics past and present on a **1** to **10** basis, while a comparison is made against previous issues of the same title, ranging from <---> to <+++>. Hence, a quality comic may score an 8 against all others, but have slid from a previous issue's 9, denoted by <->. No change is marked <=>. We do not compare **Bone** with **X-Men**, but review each within their genre.*

***Review panel:** Chris E. Bunting (CEB), Jon Edwards (JE), Kelvin Green (KG), Christine Harper (CH), Stephen Hall (SH), Stephen Hooker (SHo), David Knight (DK), Dominic McDonagh (DM), Scott Montgomery (SM), Kieron Mullens (KM), Rob Nott (RN), Leonie O'Moore (LO), Terence Stewart (TS), Alex Thompson (MAT)*

Dark Horse

BPRD: The Dead 3

by Mignola & Arcudi + Davis

<--> After a very promising start, this series seems to be floundering. Some readers may find themselves spellbound by the unfolding mystery of the secret chamber and its sole inhabitant unearthed by Johann last issue, but many will undoubtedly share Captain Daimio's impatience to get back to the business in hand, which is halting the spread of the human frog outbreak. (DK) 6

<=> While Johann the medium investigates BPRD's new headquarters, the rest of the team is introduced to a crazed scientist holed up behind it – who, surprise, surprise, has a sinister Nazi past. Meanwhile Abe Sapien's history catches up with him. Under Mike Mignola's supervision, John Arcudi crafts another creepy script, hitting the group dynamic perfectly. But it is Guy Davis – no stranger to occult titles – whose messy linework really evokes the eerie atmosphere here. (MAT) 8

Conan 12

by Busiek & Nord + Mandrake

<=> With Dark Horse apparently not automatically acquiring rights to the Red Sonja character (she was never part of Robert E. Howard's official Conan series) it seems it has found it necessary to invent its own take on her in the shape of sword-swinging she-vixen, Janissa. Whether the Conan readership really wants another man-hating warrior woman who was raped as a young girl is a moot point, but I suspect we're stuck with her for the long haul. Tom Mandrake's fill-in art (alongside Cary Nord's) lowers the quality of this issue, but that aside this is still a very good series, and the best version of the Cimmerian since the first 20 issues of Marvel's Savage Sword of Conan magazine. (RN) 7

Star Wars: Obsession 3

by Blackman & Ching

<=> The midpoint of the Revenge of the Sith lead-in series, in which Obi-Wan and Anakin battle the monstrous Durge on a derelict cruiser. As with Dark Horse's ongoing Republic series, this book is filled with pointers to the new movie, in particular Anakin's continuing path to the Dark Side. Artist Brian Ching effectively captures the characters' personalities while also delivering some excellent action sequences. (SH) 8

DC Comics

Batman Gotham Knights 61

by Lieberman & Barionuevo + Bit

<-> A deadly poison is killing the orphans once cared for by Poison Ivy in Robinson Park. Understandable though it is for Ivy to see these vulnerable saplings as kindred spirits and a special case, surely the amount of concern and compassion she has for them is inconsistent for a villain whose main psychological motivation has always been misanthropy? An appearance by Poison Ivy is not the selling point it once was. (DK) 6

The Batman Strikes! 5

by Matheny & Jones + Kelly

<-> In *Deadly Partner*, Batman faces off against Gotham City's demented dummy crime boss, Scarface. And there's an ingenious trap in store for the Caped Crusader... A snappy tale for younger Bat-fans, based on the latest WB kids animated TV show. (SM) 7

Books of Magic: Life During Wartime 6

by Spencer & Fegredo; Vertigo

<=> This has artwork by Duncan Fegredo, and so will probably sell a lot better than the last five issues, for reasons that don't do anybody a lot of credit. That aside, the comic sets up the back story, and reveals a far less pleasant side of Hunter than has been shown. That Si Spencer is able to do this so indirectly is very impressive. (DM) 8

Deadshot 2

by Gage & Cummings + Palmiotti

<=> What could have been a rather complicated plot linking together the villains out to get Deadshot for becoming the protector of a slum neighbourhood is kept simple by elegant storytelling on the part of both writer and artists. Readers get the chance to cheer for Deadshot as a good guy of the any-means-necessary variety as opposed to the self-destructive killer for hire they're probably more used to. (DK) 7

Elric 2

by Moorcock & Simonson

As someone unfamiliar with Moorcock's Elric mythos, I found this surprisingly accessible. The mythical aspects are rather quaint – if not twee – and the story of warring cousins vying for the throne is hardly unique. But it works, and it is Walter Simonson's curiously inconsistent art that raises the bar – the high points are genuinely spectacular. (CH) 7

Ex Machina 7

by Vaughan & Harris + Feister; Wildstorm Signiture

<+> While the idealist present-day Mayor Hundred grapples with the touchy ground of sexual politics, Brian K Vaughan's smart scripts gradually reveal more of his past, as the machine-master tackles a home invasion by German Intelligence. The unnecessary stiffness of Tony Harris' realistic linework may be due to his reliance on awkwardly posed photo-referencing, but it isn't helped by Jo Mettler's pasty green colouring. (MAT) 7

The Flash 217

by Johns & Porter + Livesay

In the aftermath of *Identity Crisis*, the Rogues Gallery holds a funeral service for Captain Boomerang in a miniature dimension hidden from the outside world. It's entertainingly written, with all the bitching you'd expect when these guys get together, including tensions between old and new Rogues. It looks like the Flash will be facing all his old enemies at once again. Doesn't this plot come round every two years? (DK) 7

Hard Time 12

by Gerber & Hurtt + Bird

The superhero genre needs a little intelligent subversion. Nobody can supply this quite like Steve Gerber and Hard Time is a testament to his ability. The multi-character story never loses the plot and new readers will not be lost either. The artwork by Brian Hurtt fits in perfectly with the ethos of the writer for perfect, creative symbiosis. (SHo) 6

Hellblazer 203

by Carey & Manco; Vertigo

<+> Mike Carey opens the issue with a preposterous cop out, but there's little else wrong here. Another shadowy, manipulative supernatural bad hat is introduced, but this time it just raises questions, rather than providing a deus ex machina. Leonardo Manco's art style is working well in one of the nastier, grittier storylines Carey has produced for a while. (DM) 8

The Intimates 3

by Casey & Camuncoli + Lee + Hope; WildStorm

Sometimes something can be too clever for its own good and just irritate with its smartness. The Intimates comes close but writer Joe Casey steers it away with not an entirely original set up (training facility neo mutants sounds familiar; I just can't place it!) but an interesting one. The characterisation is a bit *Beverly Hills 90210* but saved by some witty and snappy dialogue. Engrossing art too. (SHo) 7

JLA 110

by Busiek & Garney

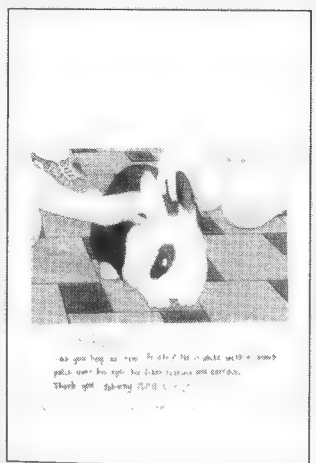
<+++> At last the Crime Syndicate of Amerika comes into its own, impersonating the absent JLA and building up resentment at a world where they aren't feared. There are some good comic moments stemming from Owlman and Superwoman's attempts to be alone together, Johnny Quick and Power Ring having a go at being superheroes, and Ultraman's pent-up anger; all of which we could have done with seeing much sooner. (DK) 6

<-> The fourth part of an aborted (I wonder why?) Crime Syndicate of Amerika miniseries that has so far been an utter yawn fest. As someone said to me the other day, "I've always thought that JLA would benefit by the removal of the team and a focus on The Weaponers of Qward". Something tells me he was flirting with irony. Kurt Busiek's dialogue is so effin dull that it is left to Ron Garney and his well-honed storytelling skills to inject some excitement. For anyone interested, the CSA are masquerading as our heroes, and The Thunderers stand around a lot, pontificating on something or other. It may all make sense someday, but I've truly lost the will to live. (TS) 4

JLA: Classified 3

by Morrison & McGuiness

<+> Where do you go to hear Superman address a bunch of apes with "...a few bananas and you belong to anybody it seems"? Only in a Grant Morrison written



We3 #3

by Morrison & Quitely; Vertigo

<=> The military sends in the ultimate canine cyborg to hunt down We3. One has to admire Grant Morrison's attempts to broaden the horizons of US science fantasy comics. But just as the experimental panel layouts here tend to hurt the storytelling's clarity, so too does the animals' fractured dialogue, resulting in a certain woolliness to a scene's progression and somewhat diminishing the story's overall impact. Negativity aside, the title looks top-notch, combining Frank Quitely's unique, meticulous linework with Jamie Grant's deft digital colours. (JE) 7

<=> Arguably the finest miniseries that Vertigo has published in a long, long while, We3 is a work of magnificent inspiration. Genuinely moving in places, it also has that very rare thing in fiction: a logical and satisfying conclusion that doesn't cheat the reader at all. The writing and art mesh so well that you'd be forgiven for thinking it's only one person handling both chores. If there's any justice, this series should win an award. (RN) 9

<=> The escaped techno-pets face their violent team member We4 as the military tracks them down, but are aided by an unlikely friend in the conclusion to Morrison and Quitely's latest collaboration. This superb series will appeal to animal lovers, action fans and pacifists alike with its portrayal of a brutalist military regime pursuing the creatures. Quitely's superbly rendered linework brings personality and life to both the characters and pages with his experimental panels breaking out of their rigid borders. (MAT) 9

hymn to superheroes will you find dialogue that snaps, crackles and pops, as Gorilla Grodd and The Ultramarines get their arses handed to them on a silver platter, and Ed McGuiness channels the energy of Kirby with some bombastic pencils and layouts. As Wonder Woman would say, "Hola". (TS) 8

Legion of Super-Heroes 2

by Waid & Kitson

<+> Someone has taken away the ability of young Naltorians to dream, and Dream Girl, Brainiac 5, Karate Kid and Shadow Lass will find out why. The new series kicks into high gear, as Mark Waid writes a teenage super group for the 31st Century today, and Barry Kitson realises that concept with a panache not seen since Paul Levitz and Keith Giffen. It's not your father's Legion; it's far too sexy for that. (TS) 8

The Losers 20

by Diggle & Oliver; Vertigo

<-> Back to the present day, the team head to London to do... um... not much at all really. Hideously dull yet again, the plot stinks of filler and the general sense is of wasting one's time. Ben Oliver steps in on the art, and does a pretty good job of mimicking the regular attractive style. (KG) 3

<=> The renegade soldiers arrive in London on the trail of CIA bad guy Max, who is busy ridding himself of unwanted attention deep in Russia. Andy Diggle's slick writing sizzles with tension, but also humour as the group deals with a bar full of Arsenal fans. Guest artist Ben Oliver seamlessly adapts his style for the title, mimicking regular Jock's scuzzy brush strokes and shadowy panels. (MAT) 8

Ocean 3

by Ellis & Sprouse + Story; Wildstorm Signature

<+> Warren Ellis deftly whittles off another smart yet disturbing sci-fi concept, as UN Weapons Investigator Nathan Kane visits the neighbouring ship of the sinister Doors corporation, manned by a zombie-like crew with company-approved personalities whose manager may hold the secret to the alien lifepods hidden under planet Europa. Chris Sprouse's clean linework coupled with Randy Mayor's sparse colours suits the anaesthetised atmosphere of this futuristic tale. (MAT) 7

Planetary 22

by Ellis & Cassaday + Martin; Wildstorm Universe

<=> Another busy month of Warren Ellis scripts, as the meticulous John Cassaday finds time between pencilling Marvel's mutants to illustrate their renowned project of homages to yesteryear's pulp superheroes. This issue sees thinly veiled pastiches of Lone Ranger and The Shadow, albeit much darker versions, as Snow tortures another member of The Four into revealing his family's vigilante past. Cassaday's return to Westerns is long overdue, while his collaboration with Ellis brings out the best in his clever storytelling devices and layouts. (MAT) 8

Plastic Man 13

by Baker

<=> With another brilliantly over the top issue of slapstick humour, it's easy to overlook the rather subversive tone of Kyle Baker's witty revival of the pliable hero and FBI agent. This issue sees subtle attacks on The Patriot Act, anti-filesharing laws, kiddie grooming, librarians and demonic books, as Plas and his wife (and fellow agent) attempt to solve the murders of arcane book collectors. This is brilliantly satirical material, but I wonder if DC realises this by aiming it at the younger reader. (MAT) 7

The Question 3

by Veitch & Edwards

<=> Vic Sage digs deeper into the secretive network of criminal activity throughout Metropolis orchestrated by the mysterious subway-based group, while Lois and Jimmy are shown the surprisingly mystical aims behind Lex Luthor's latest plans for Superman's city. Rich Veitch's clever script brings out the best in the esoteric character; but it's Tommy Lee Edwards' brilliant pages that continue to make this series, his loose yet detailed style and skilful use of colour marking him as an unsung talent. (MAT) 8

Swamp Thing 11

by Dysart & Breccia; Vertigo

<=> The escaped demonic lovers make their way out of the swamp; our elemental hero is unable to stop them or their worm-like hunter from reaching his defenceless family and the young woman who summoned them. Joshua Dysart's disturbingly apocalyptic storyline juggles many threads at once, but I'm sure he will bring them together for his conclusion. Enrique Breccia perfectly envisions Dysart's script with twisted art that wouldn't look out of place on a Judgement Day manuscript. (MAT) 8

The Witching 7

by Vankin & Gallagher + Green; Vertigo

<=> Another fine issue of a series facing imminent death. This one isn't as woeful a loss as Outlaw Nation, but the scent of wasted potential rising off the pages is still a strong one. Unfortunately the plot is just marking time as it sets up for the premature ending, but it does raise one interesting question: since when do goths sunbathe? (DM) 7

Wonder Woman 212

by Rucka & Raiz

<=> This comic might just have passed the grade, if I accept that everything leading up to this point was Rucka's idea of foreplay, but it was blown by the execrable inks of Ray Snyder over guest artist James Raiz. Page 8, top panel; are there really editors at DC who pass this work off as professional? Wonder Woman is blind, so the JLA has to beat her up to prove a point, she trots off to say something at a Memorial service (her key role in the DC Universe nowadays, it seems) and then gets god-napped into her next adventure. (TS) 3

Image

Freedom Force 1

by Dieter & Scioli

Sole artist Tom Scioli does a passable imitation of Jack Kirby, but the story is hampered by a slavish adherence to the plot of the computer game from which it is derived. While Energy-X provides a useful hook on which to hang game play on screen, having a common origin for every hero's powers in a comicbook just deprives it of variety and vitality. (DK) 5

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Invincible 18

by Kirkman & Ottley

<=> Mark heads into space to protect a mission to Mars. This is a bit of a lightweight tale, doing little to forward the ongoing plot, but it's entertaining nonetheless. Both writing and art continue to shine in this top-notch superhero book. (KG) 8

<++> Just as Mark's girlfriend is telling William and Eve her fears about Mark's elusiveness, he does his disappearing act again: called away on a security mission to protect America's space programme. Invincible's Martian adventure delights on many levels, recalling bits of Edgar Rice Burroughs, H.G. Wells, Ray Bradbury and Martian races familiar from comics. If, like me, you're slow on the uptake, make sure you study the last few pages carefully. (DK) 8

Invincible 19

by Kirkman & Ottley

<+> Mark helps out a reformed villain, and gets more than he bargained for. Good fun superheroics of an uncomplicated kind, this is no Watchmen, but restores a sense of fun long absent in the genre. (KG) 8

<-> Ryan Ottley's art always looks good, but storywise this is a bit of a dip from last issue. Invincible tackles a crime syndicate led by Machine Head, with a bunch of new villains for enforcers, as if in parody/homage to Savage Dragon. The Mark and Amber, William and Eve dating situation isn't going smoothly; and, realistically, Mark is in no position to be looking after his mom. (DK) 7

Savage Dragon 119

by Larsen

<=> This starts on storming form with our hero slugging George Bush right in the kisser on the cover. Inside there's a tiny plot in which Dragon goes after the President, having been set up last issue, which shows promise when Dragon has to wade through Bush's superhero bodyguard, but ends up as a desultory brawl. Erik Larsen and Frank Fosco parody Marvel's Hulk vs Thing battles in the back pages. (DK) 7

Ultra 8

by The Luna Brothers

<=> Almost single-handedly flying the flag for Image comics worth buying at the moment, Ultra is one of the most refreshing superhero comics currently being published. It shares a similar style to early issues of Powers, but throws in touches of chick-lit influences to present a kind of sex and shopping glamour world of designer superheroes. It rocks and it rolls... (RN) 7

The Walking Dead 14

by Kirkman & Adlard + Rathburn

<-> The ragged survivors attempt to make the prison their own, making an uneasy alliance with the remaining prisoners. Can their plans for a safe haven last? Robert Kirkman produces another wordy script as new characters are earnestly introduced, which distracts from his usually believable dialogue. Charlie Adlard's gloomy inking and scrappy linework engages healthily with Kirkman's gritty setting and the far from healthy corpses who have returned from the dead. (MAT) 7

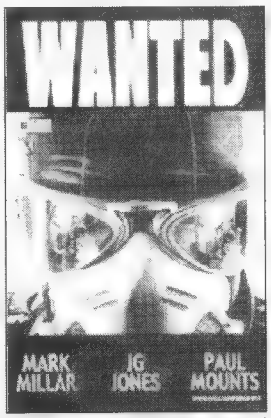
Wildguard: Fire Power 1

by Nauck

This is the first spin-off to continue the adventures of the team 'chosen' in the Wildguard six-issue mini. The new group sees action versus a career criminal and a hot, sticky menace causing havoc of a different order of magnitude. Other Wildguard contenders appear in cameos. Todd Nauck examines the duplication of powers that makes Ignacia look surplus to requirements alongside Freezerburn, and makes a satisfactory assessment of the situation. (DK) 7

Wanted 6

by Millar & Jones + Mounts; Top Cow



<-> It's disappointing that a series that packed in so much action, danger and excitement should end like this: with musings, reflections and home truths. We already knew that being a supervillain was exciting and that Wesley's mother brought him up to be a pussy, so it's irritating to have it reiterated in the denouement. The narrator's message in the final pages is disingenuous at best; disgusting at worst. (DK) 6

<=> Wanted has been an amusing (at times) comic that often leaves an (intentionally) bad taste in the mouth, mostly because the lead character is so unashamedly unsympathetic to the average reader. But then again so was Patrick Bateman in *American Psycho*. In the final episode Wesley Gibson is reconciled with his estranged father, and we get a little of the back story that led to the miniseries in the first place. The last few pages go all *Fight Club* preachy on us, but that aside it's been a fun ride while it lasted. (RN) 7

Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 515

by Straczynski & Deodato Jr + Brooks

<=> Under many a writer's hand the main plotline would likely be a drab, almost hollow, affair. But not when handled by J. Michael Straczynski. With Peter Parker's personal involvement underpinning the events – plus the intelligent use of his scientific leanings – this issue comes up as yet another winner. A title that's not generally good ... it's always good! (CEB) 8

Amazing Spider-Man 516

by Straczynski & Deodato Jr + Brooks

<=> Charlie suffers a classic Marvel lab accident, and Peter reminisces about their friendship. This story continues to fail to grab the attention, with the numerous clichés and rehashes overpowering anything new the creative team brings to them. (KG) 6

Black Panther Volume 1

by Kirby & Royer; tpbk

The first half of Jack Kirby's criminally overlooked 1970s Black Panther run is given the deluxe trade paperback treatment. Following Don McGregor's wordy maturity and relevance, it was at the time poorly received. Hindsight is much kinder to it. Wacky, exciting stories! Bonkers characters! Bright purple dialogue! Lots of pretty pictures! Simply excellent. Fingers crossed for volume two. (CH) 9

Cable & Deadpool 11

by Nicieza & Zircher

<=> When Fabian Nicieza wrote X-Men there was such a lack of interaction between the mutants and the rest of the Marvel Universe, it was almost unbearable. Here, however, he more than makes up for it as we open on Deadpool battling A.I.M.'s head honcho, Modok. Then there's The Fixer and his, um, Avengers-themed swimming pool. A riot of a read. (CEB) 8

Captain America 2

by Brubaker & Epting + Lark

<=> A run down of what this comic's new direction is and why it's so promising is made best by Kurt Busiek's letter of praise printed herein. But make no mistake, with the Red Skull dead, Cap having the most intriguing of dreams, and the return of one of this comic's deadliest villains, this is nothing but a page-turner. (CEB) 7

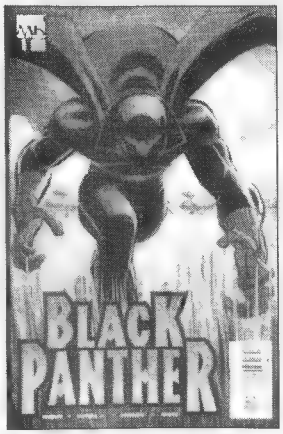
Daredevil 69

by Bendis & Maleev; Marvel Knights

<=> The Bont saga unfolds as the events leading up to Matt's torture by the old Kingpin are slowly revealed. But what gives Brian Bendis the ability to routinely produce month-by-month such excellent scripts on Daredevil? Possibly his own artistic vision gives him the knack for bringing the best out of his collaborations with his artists. He certainly works well with Alex Maleev, who equally sets the moody tone of the book. (MAT) 8

Black Panther 1

by Hudlin & Romita Jr + Janson; Marvel Knights



In the mighty "Nu Marvel" manner, Black Panther gets a relaunch without having the title character appear in the story (although we do get to see historical Panthers). Writer Reginald Hudlin has boldly gone back to the past to re-establish Wakanda as a fearsome and technologically advanced country as we see several ill-fated attempts to conquer the African nation. In the present day, the US government gets annoyed by Wakanda's no-fly zone over its land, setting up an intriguing storyline. John Romita Jr provides his customarily muscular artwork, but Hudlin lets the side down with some embarrassingly modern colloquialisms coming out of the mouths of Wakanda's attempted invaders in centuries past. (SH) 7

Fantastic Four 521

by Waid & Wieringo + Kesel

<=> Johnny Storm soon discovers that being the herald of Galactus is anything but cosmic. Although really a set-up issue for the next stage of the *Rising Storm* storyline, when maestro Mark Waid is involved you're still guaranteed new takes on old characters and more than a surprise or two, as the last page attests. (CEB) 8

The Incredible Hulk 77

by David & Weeks + Palmer

In a long-overdue reunion, writer Peter David returns to the title that made him a success, and which he in turn made a success. And what a monster opener it is, along the way giving new insight into the Hulk's powers before culminating in an ending that no reader would've seen coming. Skilfully rendered by Lee Weeks and Tom Palmer, this title is set to once again become smashing. (CEB) 8

Invincible Iron Man 2

by Ellis & Granov

<=> Almost inevitably news of delays on the title's publication are surfacing, Warren Ellis may have a recognised past of late scripts, but the case here could be due to Adi Granov's slick computer-assisted artwork. Its airbrushed blandness captures the hi-tech world of the industrialist playboy well, but the guy doesn't really do backgrounds, placing his figures in a rather anaesthetised world. Fortunately Ellis brings some life to the plot as smuggled nano-technology is violently unleashed. (MAT) 6

New Avengers 2

by Bendis & Finch + Miki

<+> The heroes try to contain the breakout, with mixed results. An all-out action issue, this is brimming with exciting scenes and top-notch artwork, but characterisation suffers. Nonetheless, this is a fun read, and a breath of fresh air for what was becoming a very stale title. (KG) 8

Change, they say, is as good as a rest. It might be dividing diehard fans but Brian Michael Bendis and David Finch's much needed reorganization of this stolid and moribund group of superheroes is long overdue. Bendis gets those fun feelings going about the plot and the storyline again; you know, like reading comics used to be. On the top of my comic shopping list. (SHo) 8

<=> An improvement on the *Avengers Disassembled* meat grinder story, Bendis is back to his old storytelling tricks here, giving us a satisfying mix of high energy action and realistic dialogue. My only criticism is that Marvel could have published this book under any title. The Avengers tag is frankly redundant taking into account the scale of the reboot. With such a mixed bag of unlikely heroes, you'd be forgiven for expecting to see John Steed, Gambit and Purdey as well. At least then the title would be a little more relevant. A good start to a new series nevertheless. (RN) 7

<=> The escaped super-powered convicts take their frustrations out on Spider-Man and the other heroes stuck on the maximum

security prison island. Even with the help of the returned uber-powered Sentry, do the heroes stand a chance? Bendis scripts a tight action-packed issue and does the world a favour by killing off Venom clone Carnage, while Finch's tight muscular pencilling and Frank D'Armata's dynamic colours bring life to the pages. (MAT) 8

New Thunderbolts 4

by Nicieza & Grummett + Erskine

<-> The main plots and characters take a back seat as we get a totally unnecessary Wolverine cameo. The art is well done throughout, but the Wolverine appearance plus some highly dubious scripting severely hampers the enjoyment of this comic. (KG) 5

Phoenix Endsong 1

by Pak & Land + Ryan

Showcasing the very welcome return of Greg Land after the collapse of CrossGen, Phoenix Endgame is really a showcase for his airbrush style art. Marvel's regular recycling of the Phoenix storyline can be a bit repetitive in an 'oh look, Jean Grey's gone mad again' kind of way, but so long as Greg Land is drawing it, I'll be buying it. (RN) 7

The Pulse 7

by Bendis & Anderson

<=> Jessica Jones continues to wander through the pages of this comic in a dazed and confused state, asking over and over again what's going on much like anyone who hasn't read Secret Wars 3 might do. The Pulse is slowly improving but it's still got a long way to go before it reaches anywhere near the heights of the excellent Alias. At the moment I still can't recommend this title to anyone but hardcore Bendis fans. (RN) 5

What If... Jessica Jones Had Joined the Avengers?

by Bendis & Gaydos

One of the most pointless comics I've seen in a long time. Brian Michael Bendis wastes a third of his allotted page count in summarising the already familiar events leading up to Jessica's invitation to join the Avengers. The What If story then promptly goes nowhere fast as it seems BMB lacks any inspiration beyond suggesting that the *Avengers Disassembled* fiasco would have been averted and Jessica would enjoy a traditional white wedding with the Mr Darcy of her dreams. Woefully poor writing, but with nice art. (RN) 5

Bendis teams up with Michael Gaydos, the definitive Jessica Jones artist, to ponder how her life could have turned out distinctly more rosy had she joined the Avengers. This is a fun and rather brisk fairy tale, where Bendis undoes all the unforgiving things he's piled on the characters. Gaydos's inky brush-stokes look a little out of place in the bright spandex world of the issue, but it's miles better than Mike McNiven's sex-kitten Jessica on the cover... (MAT) 7

Shanna, The She-Devil 1

by Cho; Marvel Knights

An obscure "female Tarzan" gets a revival courtesy of Frank Cho, purveyor of the most beautiful women in comics. Cho scripts an enjoyably pulpish storyline in which a squad of American soldiers, lost in the Savage Land, discover a left-over Nazi base which appears to have been cloning hot blondes. Throw in some hungry velociraptors and a surprising fakeout concerning who the male hero and narrator of the book actually is, and you have an entertaining read. Cho had to redraw some panels to cover up the naked Shanna. Apparently, the boob-fearing Yanks couldn't handle the sight of nipples, yet graphic depictions of a raptor clawing out a man's eyeball and biting soldiers' heads off seem to be OK. (SH) 7

Supreme Power 14

by Straczynski & Frank

<=> Near enough 20 years ago, Alan Moore wrote Miracleman #15, in which the eponymous 'hero' and his 'sidekick' Johnny Bates, kicked the living snot out of each other. If you read that comic, chances are, deja vu may not be the only sensation you'll experience. Gary Frank does well to capture J. Michael's 'tribute' to that past classic, but surely Straczynski has some new ideas to offer? (TS) 6

Ultimate Nightmare 4

by Ellis & Hairsine + various

<-> The two teams of heroes fight various horrors as they continue into the secret complex. Atmospheric writing and art cannot hide the fact that nothing has happened in this ridiculously slow-moving series. At three issues, it might have worked, at six, it's taking the mickey. (KG) 5

The Ultimates Volume 2 #2

by Millar & Hitch + Neary

< – > Ultimates 2 is hard to pin down this issue. It's not soap, nor slow-burning drama, nor action-packed adventure. It's hard to say what it is; things just sort of happen, or rather they don't. Wanda and Pietro swan around being high-cultured flaneurs, hinting at an incestuous relationship, while Captain America goes to pick a fight with Thor. It's like an issue something-and-a-half that fills in a continuity gap between issues. (DK) 6

<=> As welcome as a pyramid shaped tower of Ferrero Rocher at the Ambassador's black tie reception, the Ultimates volume 2 continues to set the standard for epic story telling in the superhero vein. Mark Millar's treatment of Thor in particular has to be one of the most original and exciting characters in comics since V for Vendetta. Every issue of the Ultimates gives me the same sense of magic and wonder that I had when I read comics as a kid. (RN) 9

<=> While Iron Man leads an international submarine rescue, the Hulk/Bruce Banner revelations reverberate throughout the team, leading to Cap confronting Thor and his anti-establishment followers. Millar is firing on all cylinders here: his cutting edge contemporising of Marvel's heroes really

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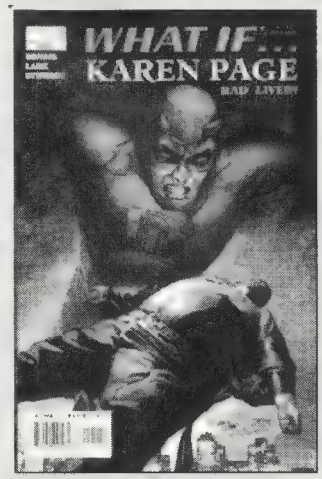
What If... Karen Page Had Lived?

by Bendis & Lark



Proving that bad lightning does strike twice in the same month, Brian Michael Bendis repeats the substandard What If formula that he applied to the Jessica Jones title. Again he wastes space on summarising previous comics history. We then learn that Karen Page surviving drives Daredevil to kill the Kingpin by accident, and he gets a life sentence in prison for it. As if any jury would ever convict him. There is no clever dialogue, no sense of pacing, just a bland 'this happens and then this happens' treatment. I wasn't aware that BMB was capable of writing so badly. (RN) 4

Bendis plays out the consequences had this pivotal moment in Daredevil's life turned out differently. Unlike his other What If? title, this is far from rosy, as Matt is driven over the edge, taking things into his own hands as events slip out of his control. The issue allows us a first peek at Michael Lark's rendition of the blind hero since signing up with Marvel: his realistic yet etchy style suits the character flawlessly. (MAT) 7

pays off on interval issues such as this, but how well will this look in future decades? Bryan Hitch's dense realistic artwork is as stunning as ever and this issue sees Patrick Stewart pop up! (MAT) 9

Wolverine 24

by Millar & Romita Jr + Janson; Marvel Knights

<+> As Wolverine and Daredevil fight, the conspiracy's true plan becomes apparent. This wonderful tale is full of delicious twists and turns, with a shock coming on every other page. The art team continues to impress with some brutal yet beautiful fight choreography. (KG) 8

<=> John Romita Jr and Richard Isanove's bulky artwork promises much after previous lacklustre covers. Unfortunately inside it's back to the recent lank and spindly renditions of characters, far from suited to the gruff stocky Logan. With another issue of superhero fighting, it's hard to believe that this is the same Mark Millar who has been producing such groundbreaking work on The Ultimates. I suppose everyone has their off days, though. (MAT) 6

Wolverine: The End 6

by Jenkins & Castellini

<-> This supposed final adventure for Logan has suffered from lengthy delays between issues so it's a relief the series is finally over. The story began promisingly, but this yawnsome finale doesn't even bother to kill off Wolvie at the end! Both writer Paul Jenkins and artist Claudio Castellini are talented creators, but they seem to have lost interest in this tale midway. (SH) 5

X-Men 166

by Milligan & Larocca + Miki

The first X-title I've read since Grant Morrison's departure and, although never wholly convinced by Morrison's tenure, alas this is camp, retrogressive superheroics of the worst kind. While the return to spandex feels largely dated, the story's flow is a tad disjointed in a strangely anaesthetised manner, and, along with some banal dialogue, lacks any spark. The highlight, however, is the Liquid! colouring team's striking, classy production values, which radically enhance the generic artwork, lending the book a menacing vibe. (JE) 5

The team investigates a mutant distress signal in the Antarctic, and stumbles on something horrific. Incoming writer Pete Milligan impresses with a story that rises above its clichéd and familiar roots with some neat little tricks. The art team, apparently enthused by the new writer, turn in a much-improved job. (KG) 7

X 23 #1

by Kyle & Yost + Tan

There's no escaping the ho hum feeling in this comic. It could be forgiven for the obvious ride on Wolverine's coat tails but the writing and art make that charitable stance impossible. Craig Kyle piles up the soap opera clichés and the art from Chrisopher Yost is, at best, perfunctory. You get the feeling that the only reason the pages are stapled into the cover is because nature abhors a vacuum. (SHo) 2

US Indies

Bipolar 5

by Keret & Hanuka + Hanuka; Alternative Comics

A welcome and laudable departure from the superhero genre that plagues....I mean bestrides the medium. There's a certain calm madness in the storytelling and this is backed up by some plain, unembellished, unoverworked but effective art from the Hanukas. It's not a challenge or an excursion into pseudo-intellectualism; Bipolar just deserves some of your time. (SHo) 8

Let's Draw Manga: Tokyo Urban-Hip Hop Culture

by Nakajima; Digital Manga Publishing/Watson-Guptill Publications; $19.95

Manga manuals are normally explaining a Japanese originated phenomenon for a Western audience, so it's an interesting reversal here as the Hip Hop culture of America is awarded a manga context. This guide really goes all out, covering a variety of material, from anatomy and clothes to environments. Moving from the basic to the elaborate to creating a hip hop-themed

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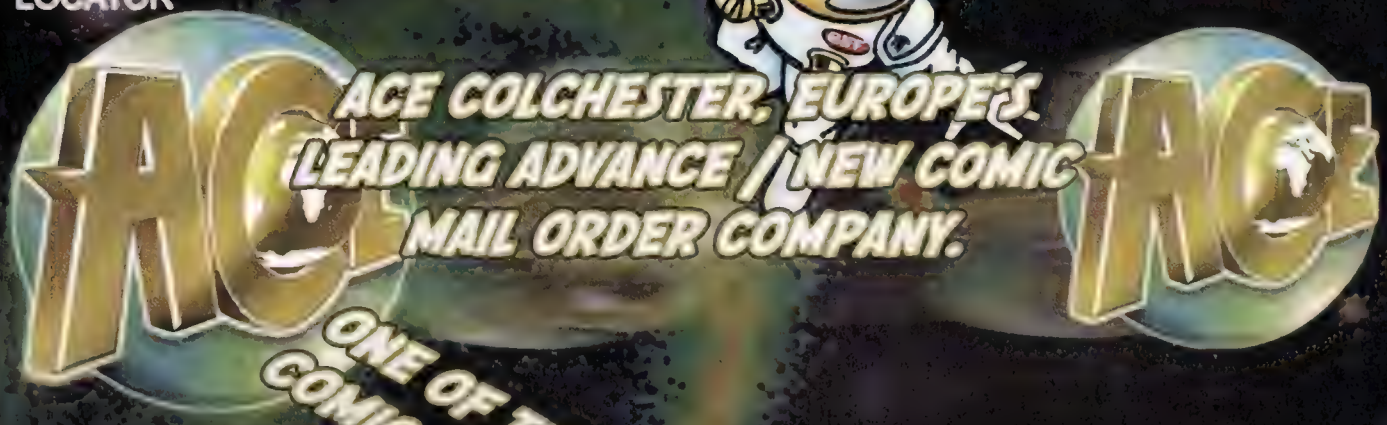

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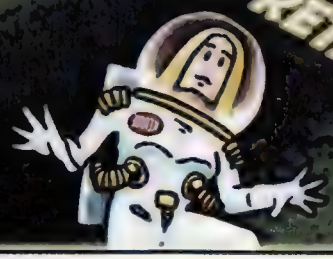

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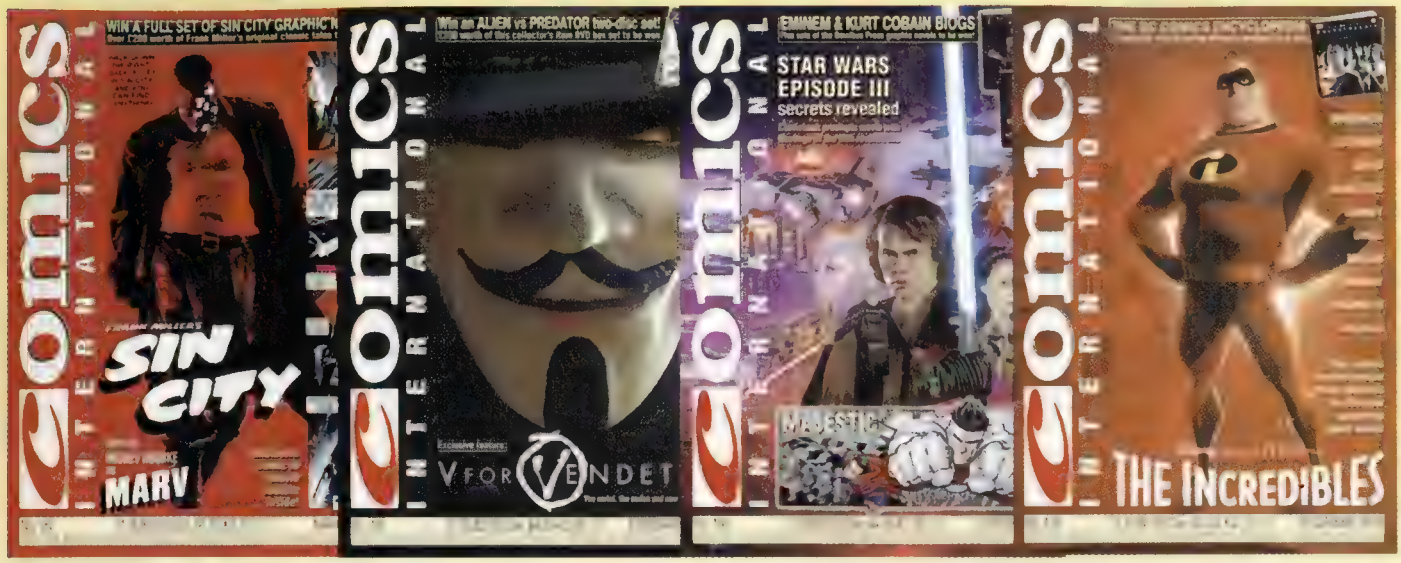

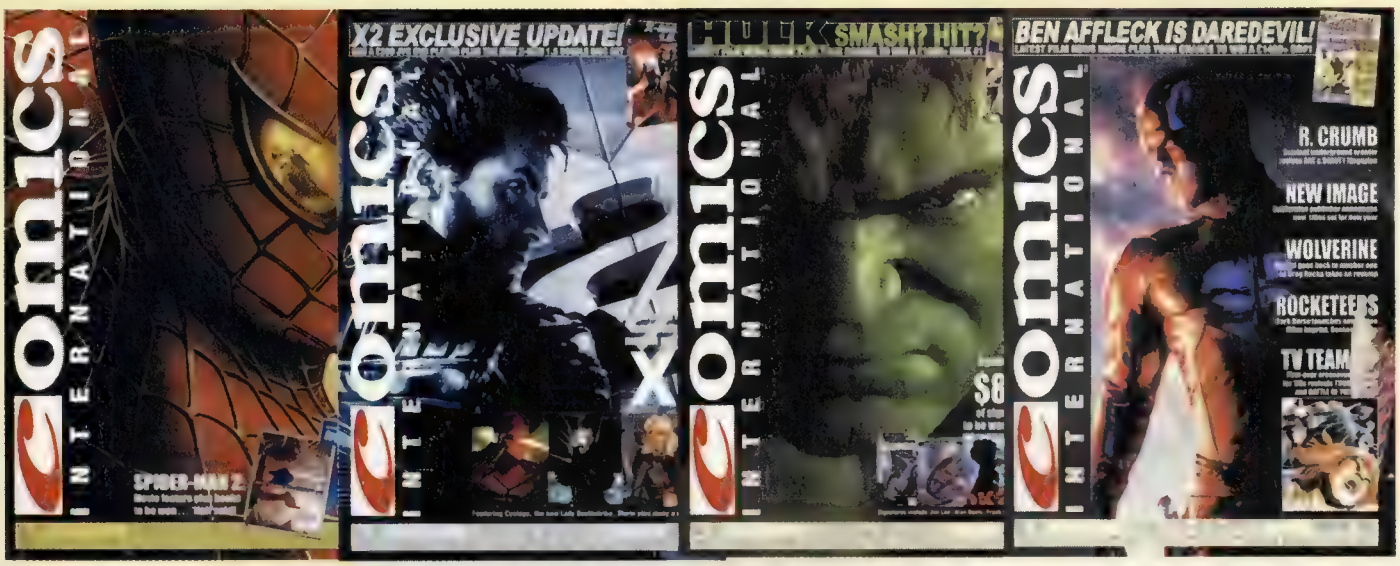

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comic strip, this is an impressive book. (CEB) 8

UK Newsstand

Astonishing Spider-Man 122

by Straczynski + Romita Jr & Hanna/ Lee + Ditko; Marvel Collectors' Edition/Panini UK

A knock-down scrap with the pretender to Dr Octopus's mantle, with a nod to the classic Amazing Spider-Man v1 #33, followed by the more mystical threat of Shathra. Spider-Man has always struggled in the latter type of tale and, despite solid scripting from J Michael Straczynski, I preferred the more traditional opening story. (KM) 6

Avengers United 49

by Busiek + Dwyer & Remender; Marvel Collectors' Edition/Panini UK

<=> Finally, an end to The Kang War, as the tide of battle turns and Earth's invaders are repelled. Predictably, Kang survives to fight another day but its not as anti-climatic as this might suggest. Despite being drawn out at times, Kurt Busiek wraps the saga up with a poignant epilogue. (KM) 7

Doctor Who Magazine 353

by Gray + Geraghty & Roach; Panini UK

<=> The end of an era, as the Doctor resorts to drastic measures to defeat the Cybermen invasion of Earth. The eighth Doctor's comic strip swansong echoes the last TV story *Survival* – with the added advantage that we don't have to wait seven years to see the debut of a new Doctor! (KM) 8

Judge Dredd The Megazine 228

by various; Rebellion

<+> The Megazine's improving curve continues in an issue with more than a hint of Scottishness and more farting comedy Scotsmen than you'd want to be trapped in an elevator with. *The Bogie Man*, *Judge Anderson* and *Cursed Earth Koburn* are top strips, and *Charley's War* is terrifically poignant. The nice free gift of the first suit in a set of Megazine playing cards coincides with a 55p price increase. (DK) 8

Mighty World of Marvel Volume 3 #26

by various; Marvel Collectors' Edition/Panini UK

<=> Black Widow returns from the dead, as she and Daredevil discover that the Hand has similar plans for Elektra. Ant Man II's origin concludes, neatly setting up his imminent appearance in Avengers United, while Dr Strange and the Hulk battle the Dread Dormammu and Kang respectively. Another enjoyable issue. (KM) 7

2000 AD Progs 1420-1423

by various; Rebellion

<=> The Judge Dredd story, *After the Bombs*, sees the welcome return of Jason Brashill's artwork to 2000 AD. Weak starter *Second City Blues* improves each episode. *Nikolai Dante* gets into its stride again from Prog 1422. It's business as usual for *Caballistics Inc. Slaine*'s writer and artist seem to be struggling to make it readable. And is it continually having a dig at women in general, or am I missing something clever? (DK) 7

Ultimate X-Men 25

by Bendis + Finch/ Vaughan + Peterson; Marvel Collectors' Edition/Panini UK

Brian Bendis and David Finch conclude a largely undistinguished run, as the X-Men bury a fallen team-mate. Brian Vaughan and Brendan Peterson spotlight Nightcrawler, Angel and Northstar, reinvent Storm's 'punk' look, and introduce an altogether more plausible Mister Sinister. Promising, though Mark Millar and Adam Kubert's earlier run remains the (high) standard to meet. (KM) 6

Wolverine & Deadpool 108

by various; Marvel Collectors' Edition/Panini UK

<-> Matt Nixon concludes his brief stand-in with another pair of uninspiring stories, which even good art cannot save. The first tale, guest-starring Alpha Flight, is particularly unsavoury. Mark Waid picks up the Deadpool saga, with pleasing results, although Ian Churchill's muscular art is less impressive than predecessor Joe Madureira. (KM) 5

Small Press

The Immeasurable Adventures of Gorky Park

by Hughes;
£3 from D. Hughes, PO Box 148
Barrow in Furness LA14 3WX

This comic charts the rise and fall of a chess grandmaster. Funny and nasty, the story rattles along quickly. Drawn in a scratchy style, perfectly suited to drawing swollen, infected eyeballs. If you see this review and think 'hmm, swollen and infected? Sounds funny!" then, you should give this a read. (LO) 7

The O Men 26

by Eden; Ominous Comics;
£1.50 from 11a Gatestone Road
Upper Norwood, London SE19 3AT
www.comix.org.uk/theomen

<+> Miss Scarlet exacts her revenge on the Vicious Circle. In this stupendous issue, Eden manages to weave a compelling character examination into a violent, *Kill Bill*-style action-fest. Wonderful imagery and amazing writing combine here for a thrilling read. Absolutely essential reading. (KG) 9

Paper Tiger Comix 1

by Duffield & various;
£1.90 from S. Duffield
Flat 2, 49 Queens Road
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This anthology is well suited to newcomers to small press as it represents a good mix of today's creators. However, it does feature some old material, so if you do read small press you've probably come across this before. Of course, the problem with diversity is that the pieces don't always sit well together. Could do with some stronger editing, but the overall quality of contributions is good. (LO) 6

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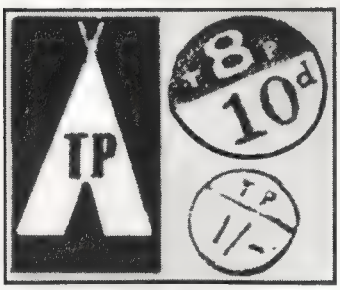
Where is it now?

*Unbelieveable, but we first covered this subject back in 1990 in **CI** #1. But you're excused for not having a copy to hand. Thorpe & Porter, like Arnold Book Company, Len Miller & Son and various others sprang out of the 1950s ban on US comics.*

Often with a base business of printing, they snatched up the UK rights to American comic strips and, through a legal loophole, got around the ban by offering UK editions, usually in black and white, sometimes as "Big 68 Pages, Don't Take Less".

One smart acquisition by Thorpe and Porter was a UK MAD which outlasted all the other reprint titles, although a certain amount of origination and "Anglicisation" made it fit better into the UK news trade.



At the end of the 1950s, TP (which had used a wigwam, or teepee as its cover badge) moved further ahead of its competition when, with relaxed laws, it began importing US comics from the November 1959 cover dates.

Staving off competition, it imported everything from Harvey, Dell and Archie titles to Charlton, Atlas/Marvel and DC. When anybody new popped up, such as THUNDER Agents' Tower Publications, that was snapped up too.

*Like **MAD**, **Classics Illustrated** was printed in the UK by Thorpe & Porter as a special British edition, whereas the imported titles all displayed a stamped UK price (see visuals) with the TP initials barely visible.*

With its massive Leicester-based warehouse, originally in Oadby but later transferred to Thurmaston, it had a voracious appetite for titles.

*Extending beyond comics, but wanting to keep the trading name clean, it used Top Sellers as its name on such adult titles it put out as **Parade** and **Cinema X**, before the clunky General Book Distributors misnomer was adopted.*

*And yes, DC was sort of involved, in that Warner's publishing arm in Europe, Williams, was the banner it also traded under (for such titles as **Tarzan** and **Laurel & Hardy**).*

*By the early 1980s, it became part of Brian Moore and Charlie Harness's distribution company, Moore Harness, when previous owners Howard & Wyndham sold it off and its remaining titles (**MAD** and **House of Hammer**) were bought by ex-employees Ron Letchford – as Suron Enterprises – and one Dez Skinn, as Quality Communications.*

Marvel took its distribution away to Comag, who already handled the UK side of its publishing and Gold Star took over DC distribution in the mid-1990s. By this time, on the poor advice of the direct market, printed sterling prices were dropped from the titles, to be replaced by ugly and expensive big white stickers. Shortly thereafter, with plummeting sales, DCs disappeared from newsagents.

US Marvels had by then seen such steep price rises under their new masters that they virtually priced themselves out of the market and they too were no longer to be found in shops. All of which explains why the average age of comics fans in the UK is around 30, with new British editions catering only for casual readers and providing no jumping on point to the collecting of US originals. Whew!

2000AD online listings

David Wickenden via e-mail:
davidwickenden@hotmail.com

DO YOU know if there is a prog listing of **2000AD** online? I've recently got an itch to get some back issues to relive my '80s yoof and was wondering if there was a webpage that lists out prog numbers and storylines/creators.

Also, I remember a Dredd storyline in **2000AD** from the early '90s that ran through the summer. It was when Dredd got sent to a prison on a distant planet and had to give the warden a good kicking before escaping.

What a nice easy one for this sadly truncated Q&A column. Just about anything you could possibly want to know about the Galaxy's Greatest is available online at the memorably-titled www.2000ADonline.com

There's even a message board if you get stuck, so fellow readers will be able to help you out.

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OPENS MIDDAY

Letters

CI, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (editorial@comicsinternational.com)

On the bright side

Lanceford Brown via e-mail:
lfbesq@hotmail.com

COMICS-wise, 2005 seems to have a lot to offer!

Well, so far I'm thoroughly enjoying Joss Whedon and John Cassaday's **Astonishing X-Men**, a monthly fix of cool stories and exceptional artwork. **100 Bullets** is still an excellent book, but I think DC should promote it more.

I'd encourage everyone to pick up copies of **Jack Staff** by Paul Grist and **Daredevil** is essential reading. I've never really been into DC's **Doom Patrol**, but I am enjoying John Byrne's art and writing on the title. **Sleeper** volume two is on a par with the first. But is it me or is the entire series set at night?

I'm a big fan of both Brian Azzarello and Jim Lee, but their **Superman** 213 threw me somewhat. Where the hell did his parents come from? I can't see how this will all be wrapped up in a couple of issues. However, I do like the fact we've been presented with a Man of Steel unsure of himself, that makes him a little scary.

Supreme Power has also been excellent. **The Intimates** is a very busy but enjoyable read. Both new Burleyman titles – **Sholin Cowboy** and **Doc Frankenstein** – have come along and broken all of the rules.

But my personal gem from 2004 was the **I am Legend** graphic novel from Humanoids Publishing, which was truly a creepy reading experience.

I'm eagerly awaiting Travis Charest's **Dreamshifters** project from DC/Humanoids Publishing. I can't wait to see a whole lot of new stuff... whatever madness both Mark Millar and Grant Morrison decide to give us this year; the completion of **Daredevil: Father** by Joe Quesada; the new **Demon** series from DC and especially DC's **All Star Comics**.

I'm keeping my fingers crossed that Warren Ellis and Travis Charest will be given a book to do. Hopefully DC will eventually get around to releasing the Barry Windsor-Smith book that he was scheduled to do for Vertigo.

All in all, it's looking good!

So there's one man's hit pick list. I'd agree with most and should have an interesting Jack Staff announcement to make soon.

Any other readers care to celebrate their fave reads in print? . . . Dez

Re: Scoring Charley

Rob Nott via e-mail:
jconstantine@clara.co.uk

AS I was the reviewer who awarded **Charley's War** a 9/10, it's probably appropriate for me to answer Chris Smillie's letter of comment in **CI** #181 ('Scoring Charley' – very witty, by the way).

I'll begin by saying that to my mind the words 'only' and '9 out of 10' are a contradiction in terms. A score of 9 out of 10 is an exceptionally high mark that recognises serious quality in both art and writing.

My reasoning goes as follows: a comic may be the best example of its kind within its own genre that I have read, but that does not necessarily mean it automatically deserves a 10 score. I've always felt that whereas the ratings between 1 and 9 reflect a kind of linear sliding scale of quality, there is a significant psychological leap from a 9 to a 10; going from a 9 to a 10 is a much bigger deal than going from an 8 to a 9. A 10 has to be perfect, or as near as dammit.

Many years ago I heard the late John Peel explain that 'Teenage Kicks' by the Undertones was his favourite record, and he considered it perfect because he couldn't think of any way to improve upon it. To his mind there was nothing that could be added or subtracted from the record to make it better. Whenever he heard new music, 'Teenage Kicks' was always the quality benchmark to which he'd compare it.

When I started reviewing comics for **CI**, I decided to set myself a similar benchmark; I searched around in my comics collection and ended up choosing the Conan story **Red Nails** by Roy Thomas/Barry Smith as being a perfect 10 – the best example of its genre (fantasy). Like John Peel, I couldn't think of any way to improve that comic, and so it became my benchmark for the top mark. Whenever I feel tempted to award a 10 rating to a comic, I always pause and consider, is it as perfect as **Red Nails**? If not, it gets a 9 at best.

To put my scoring in context, I have written just short of 650 reviews for **CI** and I've given out a total of four 10s in that time. It's not a score I give out lightly. I don't give out many 9s either! A 10 is the comicbook equivalent of the first Velvet Underground album, or Forever Changes by Love. Basically, you stand more chance of winning an Eisner Award than getting a perfect 10 out of 10 from me...

When I awarded **Charley's War** an impressive 9, that didn't necessarily imply I had read a better historical war comic (I haven't, although I haven't yet read the examples that Dez quoted in his reply). It just meant it deserved a 9.

For the record, I agree with Dez's comment regarding the art being a little too close to cartoony compared with some of Joe Colquhoun's peers. That and a tendency for Pat Mills to preach a little too much kept the comic from getting a 10.

Despite being as good as it was, I could think of ways to improve on **Charley's War**, which I couldn't with **Red Nails**. If there's room for improvement, it can't get a 10 score.

But a 9 is very good. Very, very good indeed!

Scarborough again

Jim Greer via e-mail:
jim.greer@sunderland.ac.uk

FOLLOWING Dez's original editorial (**CI** #175) and Mike Cruden's follow-up *(Letters,* **CI** #181) I just wanted to add my own experiences of this great seaside town.

Scarborough is an extremely elegant resort with many traces of its former glory still present. I used to go there every year to see my granny who lived there. And it really was treasure trove for comics! There were many shops which displayed all the latest DC comics when I was first getting into comics in the early '70s.

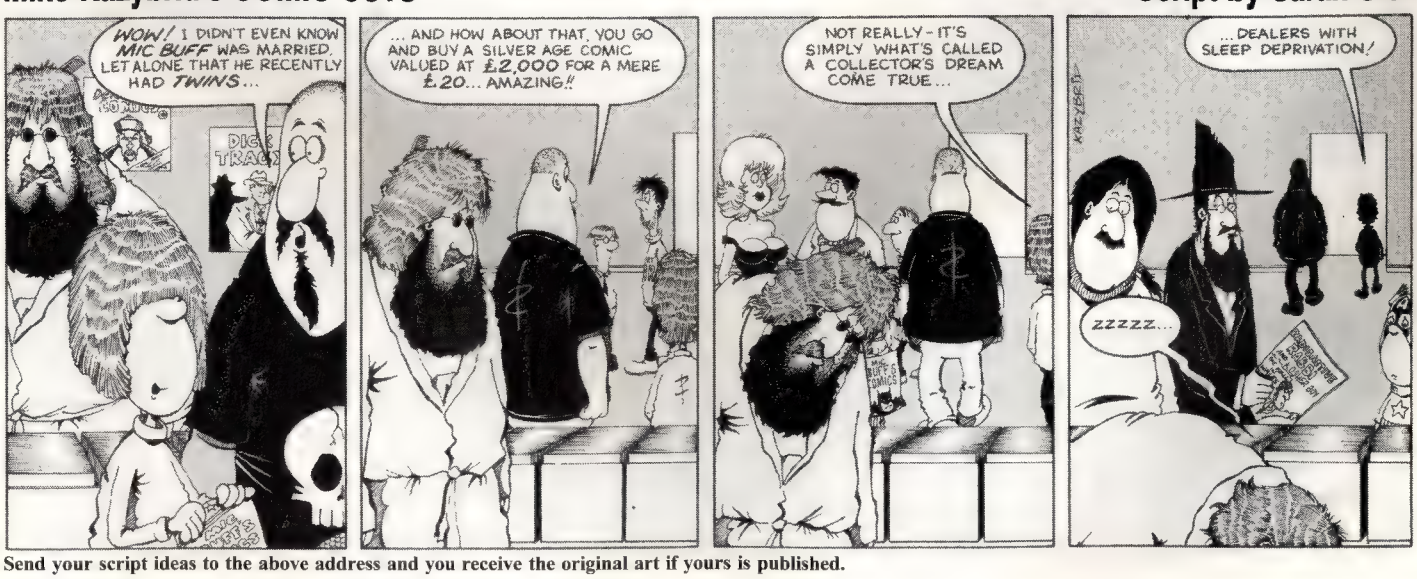
It was really a hit or miss affair in those days as to what you would come across; you might pick up issue #211 of a comic one month and then find issue #207 the next. Each shop also had a different selection of comics from the others so if you wanted to buy all the 100-pagers then you could spend days trawling all the shops.

How I used to love giants and 100-page comics, as they gave you a mixture of early classic stories and newer stories all wrapped up in a spectacular cover.

In general, comics covers of that era were better composed, I think. They used to scream out at you to be bought – covers such as Superman turning into a tree or Wonder Girl becoming a witch or Superman entering the gates of

Mike Kazybrid's COMIC CUTS

Script by Sarah Sier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ZZZZZ...

Send your script ideas to the above address and you receive the original art if yours is published.

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hell. Often, of course, the story inside didn't quite live up to expectations, but that was okay.

In any case I defy you to go to a website such as Quicksilver Comics (which I recommend) and look at some of these silver age covers and try not to buy some.

But I am getting off the point of Scarborough. Many of the 'fancy goods' stores sold copies of Marvel comics which had come over as ballast – just imagine large bundles being delivered to these shops every day. They were even more eccentric in terms of how old they were. I once visited a store in Columbus Ravine which had 10-year old Marvel comics coated in dust. On another occasion I found a 1950s war comic.

Another treat as I was entering my teens was the soft porn and adventure magazines which tended to get displayed with the comics. When the store owner's back was turned I would turn to the centrefolds of these. Many of them would have lurid covers such as white women being tied up by Viet Cong and American soldiers busting in to save them.

Then, of course, there were the Marvel black and white magazines with their fantastic painted covers. My mum was a bit dubious about American comics in general so I tended not to buy them but just enjoyed looking in wonderment at the Boris Vallejo covers.

Comics introduced me to social issues through all the coverage of radical issues such as the environment and race which were hot topics on campuses at that time. America seemed like a really exciting place back then and to experience a part of that through comics was a real privilege.

So has anybody told the Scarborough Tourist Board what we've been doing for the town these last few months? About time they took an ad, "Visit Scarborough and have a good rummage!"

Eisner, V and me

Scott MacGregor
Clairmont, 16 Balgonie Place
Markinch, Fife KY7 6AB

I WAS really moved by the Will Eisner features in **CI** #181. I learned a lot about this great man – things I never before knew.

The features have motivated me in finding out more and reading some of the additional work by him that I never knew existed.

I was also very interested and impressed by the *V For Vendetta* feature. Although I had obviously heard of it before, I have never read it... a situation that I will rectify shortly.

I have been meaning to write and thank you for ages for the £5 that I received for the caption competition (for *Comic Cuts)* many issues ago. You'll be glad to hear I put it to good use – I bought a subscription to **CI**!

PS: My answer is to this month's competition question is: *Dark Horse's five-issue miniseries from 1990.*

The question, of course, was *Where did Alien and Predator first meet?* But then, you probably already guessed that...

OK, there's a first time for everything. And our 181st issue was the first time we promised something on the cover which we didn't deliver inside – a regular event for some comics titles.

Truth is, I got so carried away putting together the incredibly nostalgic feature on V for Vendetta *that I just didn't refer back to the pagnation board. In my enthusiasm, I simply forgot I was supposed to include a competition on the V spread. Oops.*

Just so you don't feel cheated it's in this issue, albeit with a different question!

Kids... who'd 'ave 'em?

Mike Kazybrid via e-mail:
cartoonybitz@bushinternet.com

REALLY enjoyed Dez's editorial (**CI** #181). Encounters with kids are always something that remains with us. In fact, it reminded me of one rather painful encounter some years ago.

Just before I started producing the *Matt and the Cat* strip for Marvel UK's **Transformers** comic, the characters were part of a daily strip I did which ran for six years, this mainly in the **Bradford Telegraph and Argus** newspaper, and later with the **Manchester Evening News.**

During this time, I was stupid enough to agree for a toy company to produce a line of Matt soft toys. Following a promotional colouring competition, 12 "lucky" youngsters would proudly win their very own soft toy.

Come the day of the prize-giving, the newspaper had sent a photographer to capture on film the joy of the kids receiving their Matt toy.

This is the painful encounter bit: When introduced to a very prim and proper young lady named Nicola, I simply said, "Well done and here is your..." I stopped at that point as dear Nicola yelled out "I don't want that, I want a Kermit! This is a toy company so why can't I have a Kermit?"

Though that moment remains with me, I find the pills help!

Black Knight revisited

Andy B via e-mail: andy720@aol.com

LOVED the Q&A piece on *Black Knight* (**CI** #181). Seemed like a real trip down memory lane for Dez, what with that and the *V for Vendetta* feature (also great!).

Though I've heard on the net that WildStorm has now nicked the idea of Otherworld, I'd like to cast my vote for a collection of the missing link in the Captain Britain chain... *The Black Knight.*

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Directory

An at-a-glance reference guide to everything that counts in comics

Internet Listings

Comics creators

Jessica Abel ..... www.artbabe.com
Neal Adams ..... www.nealadams.com
Kyle Baker ..... www.kylebaker.com
Leo Baxendale ..... www.reaper.co.uk/main.htm
Brian Bolland Art ..... www.velouria.com/Bolland
Mark Bright ..... www.mdbright.com
Eddie Campbell ..... www.eddiecampbellcomics.com
John Cassaday ..... www.johncassaday.com
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Joseph Michael Linsner ..... www.linsner.com
Tom Lyle ..... www.tomlyle.com
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Retail Index: UK

Key to the abbreviations used:

imp = air imported new issues
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gn = graphic novels
tpbk = trade paperbacks
STO = standing order service (new comics reserved)
s-p = small press and fanzines
ind = independent comics
u/g = underground comix
prl = peripherals/supplies
RPG = role playing games
CCG = customisable card games
merch = trading cards, videos, t-shirts, posters, etc

Sorry, no websites, this is a shop guide

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Central London

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5QJ. Mon-Thurs 10-5.45; Fri 10-6.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-3.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 020 7924 3609

Book & Comic Exchange, 14 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Mon-Sun 10-8. Nothing legal refused! (back, ind, u/g) 020 7229 8420

Comic Showcase 63 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0NE. Sun-Wed 10-7; Thurs-Fri 10-8; Sat 9.30-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, cartoon books, original art) 020 7434 4349

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR. Mon-Wed 10-7; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-7; Sun 12-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, sci-fi/fantasy, books, video/DVD, games, mags, toys) 020 7420 3666

Gosh!, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (opposite British Museum). Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, foreign, largest range newspaper strip compilations in UK) 020 7636 1011

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV, fantasy/horror, body art, subculture) 020 7485 9320

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftsbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EH. Mon-Wed 10.30-6.30; Thurs-Sat 10-7; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV/fantasy) 020 7836 5630

MOVED **Orbital**, 148 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0LB. Mon-Sat 10.30-7; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, manga, toys, Transformers) 020 7240 7672

Outer London

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, prl, merch, sci-fi, original art) 020 8686 2400

Ashcan Ltd, 3 Eagle Star House, 299-301 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Tues-Wed/Fri 12-5; Thurs 9-6; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 0845 166 2532

Atomic Comics, 1112 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Tues 10.30-5.30; Wed 1-5.30; Thurs-Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, art books, Games Workshop, toys, kits) 020 8597 8547

Calamity Comics, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 020 8427 3831

Epic Heroes, 21/23 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7JE. Mon-Sat 10-6. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, toys, posters, Transformers) 020 8952 7181

Forbidden Planet, 175 North End, Croydon CR0 1TP. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-6. (back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch) 020 8688 7190

Krypton Komics, 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Tues-Wed 11-6; Thurs 10.30-7; Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 Nearest Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind) 020 8801 5378 fax: 8376 3174

They Walk Among US, 26 Red Lion Street, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RW. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-6; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, fantasy/sci-fi/horror, subculture) tel/fax: 020 8948 8476

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, London SW15 1JP. Mon-Wed 10.30-6; Thurs-Fri 10.30-7; Sat 10.30-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, Gold/Silver/Bronze Age specialists, British comics/annuals, books) 020 8788 2052

South East

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch) 01206 561912

The American Comic Shop, 1 Church Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BS (off High Street). Mon-Fri 10-5.30 (Tues until 5); Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, action figures) 01634 817410

Calamity Comics, 162 High Street, Watford WD17 2EG. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 01923 249293

Cartoon Shop, 19 East Square, Basildon, Essex SS14 1HT. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01268 534194

Central City Comics, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, foreign) 01473 233017

Comic Showcase, 19-20 St Clements Street, Oxford OX4 1AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01865 723680

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1JN. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, tpbk, gn, merch, CCG, toys) 01628 777998

David's Comic Shop, 5 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.45; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g) 01273 691012

Daydream Nation Trading Cards at Hive, 6 Kensington Gardens, Brighton BN1 4AL. Mon-Sat 10-6 (CCGs, cards, sports, Ultra-Pro) 01273 687 877

Forbidden Planet, 60 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch, videos, sci-fi/fantasy books, film/TV magazines) 01223 301666

Forbidden Planet, 44 The Priory Centre, Dartford, Kent DA1 2HS. Mon-Wed 10.30-5.30; Thurs-Sat 10-5.30 (back, gn, ind, PRG, CCG, merch) 01322 224837

Incognito Comic Shop, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton LU1 2TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, STO, s-p, CCG, merch, Star Trek/Wars, sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Planet Ace, 324-325 Chartwell North, Top Floor, Victoria Plaza, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5SR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 01702 613021

Steve's Comics, The Bookstall, Beckenham Junction Station, Rectory Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1HY. Mon-Fri 6-7; Sat 7-5 (back – Marvel, DC – ind, British comics, tpbk) 07977 751442

Slough Computers, 50 Village Shopping Centre, Slough, Berks SL1 1HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, STO, ind, cards, second hand video games) 01753 521594

Time Trek, 46 High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1EG. Mon-Wed/Fri 9.30-5.30; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-5.30; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, CCG, prl, sf TV/film) 020 8313 0677

Whatever Comics, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, kits) 01227 453226

Whatever Comics, 5 Middle Row, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, model kits) 01622 681041

Midlands

Abstract Sprocket, 29 St Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01603 624410

Close Encounters, 59 Midland Road, Bedford MK10 1PW. Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat 9-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, merch, video, DVDs, action figures, t-shirts, trading cards) 01234 270777

Comic Culture, The Mall, 257-259 High Street, Lincoln LN2 1HX. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl) 01522 546611

Forbidden Planet, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF. Mon-Wed 9.30-6; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV) 02476 229672

Forbidden Planet Superstore, 38 Priory Queensway, Birmingham B4 7LA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs-Fri to 6) (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, books, games, mags, kits, toys, videos) 0121 236 3026

FPI Derby, 1/2 The Corn Exchange, Albert Street, Derby DE1 2DS. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, merch, rock/film TV memorabilia, video games) 01332 206606

FPI Hanley, 52 Stafford Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1JB. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01782 279294 fax: 202381

FPI Leicester, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 01162 515266

FPI Nottingham, 19-23 Friar Lane, Nottingham NG1 6DA. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01159 484122

FPI Wolverhampton, 23 Victoria Street, Wolverhampton WV1 3NP. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01902 717440

Ground Zero, 9 Toothill Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 1NJ. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, prl, CCG, merch, toys) 01623 622017

Nostalgia & Comics (FPI), 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon-Thurs 9.15-5.45; Fri-Sat 9.15-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0121 643 0143

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, manga) 0115 950 8045

Phoenix Comix, 29 Abington Square, Northampton NN1 4AE. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, RPG, CCG, action figures) 01604 602311

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 6 East Street, Derby DE1. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, fantasy books, film/TV) 0115 950 9231

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 16 Angel Row, Nottingham NG1 6HL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, miniatures) 0115 950 9231

North West

All-American, 102 Newport Street, Bolton BL3 6AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, Star Wars, WWF, action figures, S/Age, videos, records, CDs) 01204 366553

Alpha Omega Comics, 33-35 Library Street, Wigan, Lancs WN1 1NN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, merch, videos) 07796 854644

Batcave, 39 Penny Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 6HQ. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, RPG, CCG, merch) 01254 667488

Forbidden Planet, 92 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi horror) 0151 707 1491

Forbidden Planet Megastore (FPI), 65 Oldham Street, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1JR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (two floors; imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, books, toys, film and TV tie-ins, manga) 0161 839 4777

Imagination Station, 41 Bank St, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8HJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch)

Millennium Comics, 4 Church Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NT. Mon-Tues 10-5; Thurs-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01606 49255

Thunderbooks, 332 Lytham Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 1DW. Mon/Tues/Thurs-Sat (Sundays in June-Oct only) 10-5.30; Wed 1-3.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, media collectors' items) 01253 348321 fax: 407813

Thunderbooks II, 116 Friargate, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01772 204287

Time Tunnel, 13 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 2BS. Mon and Wed-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, merch, film/TV memorabilia, action figures, videos, model kits) 01270 215496

Worlds Apart (FPI), 58-60 Lime Street (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film) 0151 707 0839

North East

Books 'N' Comics, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, fantasy and film magazines, Doctor Who/Star Trek) 01642 249143

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 30 Eastgate, The Headrow, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, film/TV mags, posters, toys, kits, trading cards, stills, Star Trek/Doctor Who) 0113 242 6325

Forbidden Planet, 59 Grainger Street, Newcastle NE1 5JE. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, fantasy/sci-fi books, videos) 0191 261 9173

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 41 Dundas Street, Middlesbrough TS1 1HR. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, gn, s-p, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, video, action figures, film/TV, manga) 01642 248889

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Matilda Street, off the Moor, Sheffield S1 4QD. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Wed-Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, model kits, sci-fi/fantasy books, horror magazines, newspaper strip books) 0114 276 9475

The Last Picture Show, 38-39 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thurs 10-8; Fri 10-9; Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV and rock memorabilia) 0114 256 9604 fax: 255 3399

Millennium Comics, Stall 141, Warrington Indoor Market. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01925 575657

Off-World Comics, 200 Park View, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3QP. Mon-Tues/Thurs 10-5.30 (closed Wed); Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch) 0191 251 2288

OK Comics, 19 Thorntons Arcade, Briggate, Leeds LS1 6LQ. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl) 0113 2469366

Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield. Mon-Tues/Thurs-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, Star Trek specialists) 0114 275 8905

Travelling Man, Unit 8/9, The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 0113 242 7227

Travelling Man, 54 Goodramgate, York YO1 2LF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 01904 628787

2Tone Comics, 40 Market Street, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 6AA. Thurs-Sun 10.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, merch, CGC) 01422 845666

West Country

American Dream Comics, 72 Walcot Street, Bath BA1 5BD. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, hobby kits, CDs) 01225 424881

American Graffiti, 78 Church Lane, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 1BH. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01271 325740

Area 51, 143 Gloucester Road, Bristol. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, original art) 0117 924 4655

Automattic Comics, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Road, Corsham SN13 9BQ. Mon-Tues 12-5; Thurs-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01249 701647

Collector's Choice, 45 Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1TX. Mon-Sat 9-5 (S/Age, British comics/annuals, vintage mags, toys, memorabilia) 01452 410232

Forbidden Planet, 30 Penn Street, Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, subculture) 0117 929 8692

Forbidden Planet, 43-45 East Street, Southampton SO14 3HN. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-6; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 023 80230991 fax: 230996

Ian's Books & Comics, 195a Albert Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO4 0JP (next to Tesco). Mon-Tues/Thurs-Fri 10.30-5.15 (Wed closed); Sat 10-5.15 (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, prl, toys) 02392422731

Kathies Comics, Unit BG29, Broadmead Gallery, The Galleries Shopping Centre, Bristol BS1 3XB. Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Thurs 9-6; Sun 11-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0117 922 1170

Kathies Comics, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 01752 257800

Paradox Comics, 17 High St, Poole, Dorset BH15 1AB. Mon-Fri 10.30-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, merch, videos) 01202 661346

Wonderworld, 540 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch, film/TV/media, beanie babies) 01202 394918

Wales

Cardiff's Comic Guru Presents!, 20-22 Wyndham Arcade, Cardiff CF10 1FJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-9; Fri-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 029 202 29119

Cardiff Fantasy Centre, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sat 9.30-4.30 (imp, back, STO; established over 20 years) 029 206 58184 (eves)

Comix Shoppe, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, anime, Games Workshop) 01792 642097

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5 Duke Street, Cardiff. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri 10-5.30; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, sci-fi fantasy/horror books, Star Trek/Wars) 029 202 28885

Negative Zone, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind; established for 12 years) 01633 222159

Scotland

Asylum Books & Games, 29 Adelphi, Aberdeen AB11 5B2. Mon 10-8; Tues-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-8; Fri-Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, new/second hand RPG, CCG, books, original art) 01224 574637

Black Hole Comic Shop, Unit 3, 5 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1ER. Mon-Thurs 10-5; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, second hand records, CDs, videos) 01382 221037

City Centre Comics, 51 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5LU. Tues-Sat 10-5 (back) 0141 552 2208

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1JX. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 01224 622131

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 40-41 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1LL. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5. (imp, STO, s-p, ind, merch, foreign) 0131 558 8226

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 168 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0141 331 1215

Justice Comics, Unit 36, The Arcade, Stirling FK8 1AX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 01786 447687

Kapow!, 28 Allison Street, Govanhill, Glasgow G42 8NN (off Pollokshaws Rd). Tues-Sat 11-6 (buy and sell back, gn, ind, mags, videos, DVDs, new and second-hand books, merch) 0141 4241600

Plan 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB25 1NE. Mon-Wed 10-5; Thurs 10-6; Fri-Sat 10-5; Sun 1-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, WWF, merch, sci-fi) tel/fax: 01224 624467

Red Hot Comics, Block D Unit 7, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH. Mon-Sat 11.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0141 630 0049

Northern Ireland

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 52-54 Ann Street, Belfast BT1 4EG Mon-Wed 9-5.30; Thurs 9-8.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 1-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 028 90438744

Planet Ace Derry, 33 Shipquat St, Derry, Londonderry BT48 6DF. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 02871 369787

Retail Index: USA

When telephoning from outside the USA, include the bracketed 00. Out-of-town US calls begin with the 1 prefix only. The following is a fraction of the estimated 3,000+ US comics stores.

Alabama

Optic Nerve, 1930 12th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35205 (film, newsstand, ind) (00)1 205 933 2787

Alaska

Bosco's in Spenard, 2606 Spenard Road, Anchorage 99503. Mon-Sat 11-8, Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, merch) (00) 1 907 274 4112

Bosco's Diamond Centre, 800 East Diamond Boulevard, Anchorage 99577. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, games, Star Wars/Trek) (00) 1 907 344 3963

Bosco's in Eagle River, 11432 Business Boulevard, Eagle River. Mon-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, merch) (00) 1 907 696 5166

Arizona

Lost Dutchman, 747 West Camelback Road, Phoenix, AZ 85013. Mon-Sun 10-7. (new, back) (00)1 619 278 0371

California

Comickaze, 5525 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 62117-2342. Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat 11-6; Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 858 278 0371

Comix Experience, 305 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94117. Mon-Sat 11-7; Sun 12-5 (new, back) (00)1 415 863 9258

Flying Colors Comics, 2980 Treat Blvd, Concord, CA 94518. Mon-Sat 11-7 (Fri until 8); Sun 12-6 (new, back, ind, cards, merch) (00)1 510 825 5410

Lee's Comics, Inc., 1020-F N Rengstorff Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043. Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, s-p, adult, merch) (00)1 650 965 1800

Lee's Comics, Inc., 2222 South El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403. Mon-Sun 10-9, (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, adult, s-p, merch) (00)1 650 571 1489

Meltdown Comics & Collectibles, 7522 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046 (toys, comics, books) (00)1 323 851 7223

Stand-Up Comics, 10020 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Mon-Fri 11 7; Sat-Sun 11-6 (new, back, cards, anime, CCG, merch) (00)1 510 525 3344

Third Planet, 3822 Sepulveda Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90505. Sun-Thurs 11-8; Fri + Sat 11-9 (new, ind, back, CCG, RPG, GW, sci-fi/fantasy, anime, merch) (00)1 310 791 6227

Hawaii

Gecko Books & Comics, 3613 Waialae Avenue, Honolulu, 96816. Mon-Sun 9-9 (new, back, cards, toys, merch) (00)1 808 732 1292

Illinois

Comic Kingdom, 5941 W Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634. (new, back) (00)1 773 545 2231

Louisiana

Comic Cosmos, 343 W Esplanade Avenue, Kenner, LA 70065. Mon-Thur 11.30-7, Fri-Sat 11-7.30, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, toys, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

Crescent City Comics & Cards, 6111 Elysian Fields, New Orleans, LA 70122. Mon-Sat 11-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

More Fun Comics, 8200 Oak Street, New Orleans, LA 70118. Tues-Sat 11-7, Sun-Mon 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, merch, toys, CDs) (00)1 504 865 1800

Maine

Casablanca Comics, 151 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04101. Mon-Sat 10-9, Sun 12-7 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, art) (00)1 207 780 1676

Casablanca Comics, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Windham, ME 04062. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, merch)(00)1 207 892 0056

Massachusetts

Comicopia, 464 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215. Mon-Sun 11-7 (Wed 10-8) (new, merch, CCG, manga, tpbk)(00)1 617 266 4266

Minnesota

Uncle Sven's Comic Shoppe, 1838 St Clair Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55105. Mon-Fri 3-6, Sat 11-4 (new, back, tpbk, gn, videos, action figures, CCG, RPG; est 19 years) (00)1 651 699 3409

New York State

Earthworld Comics, 327 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. Mon-Wed 11-6; Thur-Fri 11-7, Sat 11-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, ind, manga/anime, cards, merch) (00)1 518 465 5495

Forbidden Planet (FPI associate), 840 Broadway (at 13th St, NY 10003. Mon-Sat 10-10; Sun 12-10. (new, ind, back, RPG, merch, fantasy) (00)1 212 473 1576

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 4 West 33rd Street (opposite Empire State Building), NY 10001. Mon-Sat 9am-11pm; Sun 10-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 212 268 7088

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 325 New Dorp Lane, Staten Island, NY 10306. Mon-Sun; 12-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 718 351 6299

Midtown Comics, 200 West 40th Street, NY 10018 (00)1 212 302-8192

Ohio

The Laughing Ogre, 4258 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Mon-Sat 10-9; Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 614 267 6473

Oklahoma

Time Warp, 588 SE Washington Street, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (new, back, cards, games, toys, CDs, sci-fi/fantasy) (00)1 918 335 3373

Pennsylvania

Comic Castle, 17 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA 17703 Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back) (00)1 717 322 8763

Golden Eagle, Berkshire Square, 1159 Berkshire Boulevard, Wyoming, PA 19610 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 376 8255

Golden Eagle, Fairgrounds Square Mall, Reading, PA 19605 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 921 3160

Tennessee

Collector's World, 1511 E Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37130. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, Hickory Plaza South Central, 5751 Nolensville Road, Nashville, TN 37211. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, 10820 Kingston Park #10, Knoxville, TN 37922 Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 423 675 6830

Collector's World, 4006 Granny White Park, Nashville, TN 37204 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 615 385 8136

Texas

Cliff's Comics, 2205 West Berry Street, Fort Worth, TX 76110. (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 817 927 7172

Collectible Heroes, 502 West Calton Road #307, Laredo, TX 78041. Mon-Wed 2-7.30; Thurs-Sat 11.30-7.30 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 956 791 8428

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 616 West 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705 (new, back, games, anime, miniatures, prl) (00)1 512 454 2399

Virginia

Thore Comics, 3514 Oaklawn Boulevard, Hopewell, VA 23860. Mon-Sat 11-7, (new, back, Silver Age, sci-fi, M:TG, cards, vinyl)(00)1 804 458 9561

Trilogy Shop, 700 E Little Creek Road, Norfolk, VA 23518. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, merch) (00)1 757 587 2540

Wisconsin

Lost World of Wonders, 6713 West Oklahoma Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53219 (00)1 414 328 4651

Direct Market Retailers:

Comics International's Retail Index is THE international retail reference source for collectors, creators, publishers and journalists. Through it you can reach over 40,000 dedicated readers each issue for only £6 (US $10) a month! Bookable in six-issue blocks, retailers wishing to be included should send US $60 or £36 (UK: please add £6.30 to cover VAT @ 17.5%) plus shop information as detailed on previous page to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after various entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Retailers: International

Australia

Arcadia Unbound, 267 Forest Road, Hurstville, NSW 2220. Mon-Fri 10.30-7, Sat 10-4, Sun 12-3 (imp, back, manga, merch, CCG) (0061) 2 9585 1489

Books & Bounties/Comics Haven, 157a Charters Towers Road, Townsville, Queensland 4812. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG, CCG) (0061) 7 4779 2408

Fan Attic, 1st Floor, 91 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4002. Mon-Sun 9.30-5.30 (toys, Star Wars, sci-fi collectibles) (0061) 7 3221 1420

Kinda Lotsa Comics and Stuff, Shop 4, 503-511 King Street, Newtown, Sydney, NSW. Mon-Sat 10.30-7.30 (back, toys, merch)(0061) 2 9565 1054

Known Space Books, 1st Floor, 108 Gawler Place, Adelaide, SA 5000. Wed-Sat 12-6 (US/UK back) (0061) 8 8223 4304

Phantom Zone, 23 Anderson Street, Chatswood, NSW 2067. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9411 3709

Phantom Zone, 198 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW 2250. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 43 25 4599

Phantom Zone, 207 George Street, Liverpool, NSW. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9601 2622

Phantom Zone, 285 Hunter Street, Newcastle, NSW. 2300. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4929 5717

Phantom Zone, 101a Argyle Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150 Mon-Fri 9-6; Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, books, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9891 1848

Phantom Zone, 268 Crown Street, Wollongong, NSW. 2500. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4228 7393

Austria

Comic Treff, Getreidemarkt 2-4, 1010 Vienna. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 10-1 (imp, back, gn, CCG) (0043) 11 586 76 27

Belgium

Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels. (3 floors; imp, back, merch, US/French, STO, toys) (0032 2) 534 63 67 (fax 538 24 52)

Canada

Connection MD, 1539 Van Horne Avenue, Montreal, Quebec H2V 1L4. Mon-Sat 11-6 (new, merch, back, CCG) (00)1 514 948 2627

Dragon Lady Comics & Paper Nostalgia, 609 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1B5. (00)1 416 536 7460

Little Shop of Heroes, 160 Wallace Avenue, South Listowel, Ontario N4W 1X9 (00)1 519 291 2281

Silver Snail Comic Shop, 367 Queen Street West. Toronto M5V 2A4. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 11-8; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (00)1 416 593 0889

France

Album, 67 boulevard St Germain, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 53 10 00 60

Album, 6 rue Dante, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 43 54 67 09

Alpha Omega, 25 rue de la Clef, 59800 Lille. Mon 2.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 10.30-12.30/2.30-7.30 (imp, back, French, merch, trading/gaming cards, toys, RPG, Wars/Trek, B5, L5R) (0033) 320 319 375

Astro City, 22 rue Masurel, 59800 Lille. Mon 3-7.30; Tue-Sat 10-12.30, 2-7.30 (imp, manga, cards, merch, kits) (0033) 320 55 1010

Impact Comics, 64 rue Condorcet, 75009 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, merch, CCG)(0033) 42 80 30 10

L'Antre des Dragons, 56 rue de Loup, 33000 Bordeaux. Mon-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0033) 55 65 17378

Les Nageurs de Sable, 14 rue Courteline, 37058 Tours. Mon-Sat 11-1/2-7 (imp, back, cards, merch) (0033) 2 47 39 52 40

Pulps, 14 bld Morland, 75004 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, RPG) (0033) 1 42 72 55 25

Germany

Black Dog Comics, Rodenberg Strasse 9, 10439 Berlin. Mon-Fri 11-6.30, Sat 11-2 (imp, back, gn, t/cards) (0049) 30 4473 6486

Grober Unfug, Zossenerstrasse 32-33, 10961 Berlin. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0049) 30 6940 1490

Greece

Metropolis Comics, 94 Metropoleos St, 54622 Thessaloniki. Mon-Sat 10.30-3.30/7.30-11.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0030) 3 193 7775

Solaris, 6 Botasi Str, 10682, Athens. Mon-Sat 9-3.30/5-8.30 (imp, back, gn, merch) (0030) 1 384 1065

Holland

Henk Lie's Comics & Manga Store, Zeeduk 104, 1012BB Amsterdam. Mon-Sat 11-6; Sun 11-9 (imp, cards, merch, CCG) (0031) 20 421 3688

Hungary

Troll Kepregenyta'r, Terez Krt 13, Budapest 1067. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1(imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0036) 1 322 6026

Irish Republic

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5-6 Crompton Quay, Dublin 2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 10-7); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, u/g, UK, gn, STO) (0035) 3167 10688

Sub-City Comics, 2 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3167 71902

Sub-City Comics, Unit 10, Level 1, Corbettcourt Centre, Eyre Square, Galway. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3915 65994

The 3rd Place, Crow Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3163 36965

Italy

Avalon, via Battisti 9/b, Bologna. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 051 234459

Avalon, via Pedriali 21, Forli. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 0543 33523

Avalon, via Settembrini 20, Milan. Mon 3.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 022 9400410

Avalon, via Foscolo 3, Padova. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7. (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch)(0039) 049 658290

Avalon, via Bissolati 68, Rome. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, cards, merch)

Avalon, via Magenta 0, Torino. Mon 3.30-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1, 2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 011 5617252

Forbidden Planet, via Pinerolo 11/15, 00182 Rome (imp, back, gn) (0039) 06 70305702

Il Marchio Giallo, via Deghi Scipioni 116, Rome. Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, merch, kits) (0039) 06 361 40 60

La Borsa del Fumetto, via Lecco 16, 20124 Milano. (imp, back, European and RPG, CCG) (0039) 11 5617252

Malaysia

The Mind Shop, Starhill Centre, Jalang Bukit Bintag, Kuala Lumpur. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 241 8871

The Mind Shop, S 58 Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 719 8246

The Mind Shop, Jin SS21/39, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 717 6602

New Zealand

Heroes For Sale, Level 2, 62 Queen St, Auckland. Mon-Sat 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g)(0064) 9 307 0682

Whitcoulls Corner Branch, 210 Queen Street, Private Bag 92098, Auckland. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, s-p, merch, ind, u/g) (0064) 9 356 5400 (fax: 9 356 5408)

Portugal

BdMania, Rua das Flores 67-71 R/C, 1200 Lisboa. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, CCG, merch) (00351) 21 346 1207

Interzona, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Loja 203, Rua Luis Veaga Lertao 98-120, 6050 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

Mundo Fantasma, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Rua Luis Veiga Leitao, 98/120, 1 Andar-Loja 203, 4050-399 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (US imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

South Africa

Euroniag, Shop 79A, East Rand Mall, Boksburg, Johannesburg. Mon-Sun 9-10 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0027) 11 896 3773

Zed Bree's Comic Universe, Mediterr-anean Building, 24 Tenth Ave, Edenvale 1610 Gauteng. 9.30-6 (imp, merch, gn, CCG) 002711 453 4215 (fax 453 4459)

Spain

Gigamesh, RDA San Pedro 53, 08010 Barcelona. Mon-Sat 10-1.30/4.30-8 (imp, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0034) 3 246 6359

Sweden

Comics Heaven, Stora Nygatan 23, 11127 Stockholm. Mon-Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, gn, merch)(0046) 8 202516

Switzerland

Analph Comicladen Strassburgstr, 10 PO Box 1030, 8004 Zürich. (0041) 1 2419695 fax 1 2403442

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicate that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

International Festivals

A listing of the world's major comics festivals and conventions. For further information, call the organisers on the phone, fax or e-mail numbers provided. To view updates, contact them on their websites. Organisers' estimates of their previous year's attendance is given in brackets.

February 25-27: United States

MEGACON 2005, Orange County Convention Centre, Orlando, Florida. Organisers MegaCon, PO Box 1097, Safety Harbor, FL 34695, USA. 001 727 796 5725. www.megaconvention.com

April 2-3: England

MEMORABILIA '05, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Memorabilia, Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa CV32 5SZ. 0870 224 8615. www.memorabilia.co.uk

May 13-15: England

COMIC EXPO 2, British Empire and Commonwealth Exhibition Hall and Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol. Organisers: Area 51 & Comics International. 01179 244655. E-mail: comicexpo@fsmail.net. Website: www.comicexpo.net

May 13-15: Finland

ARCTIC COMICS FESTIVAL, KEMI. Organisers: The Arctic Comics Centre, Rautatienkatu 13 B, FIN-90100 Oulu, Finland. 00358 400 514 540. www.kemi.fi/sarjis

May 14-15: England

LONDON EXPO, ExCel Convention Centre, Royal Victoria Dock, London. Organisers: London Expo (EW), PO Box 38727, London E10 7YH. 020 8523 1074. E-mail: info@londonexpo.com www.londonexpo.com

May 26-29: Switzerland

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE LA BANDE DESSINEE DE SIERRE. Organisers: Festival BD Sierre, CP 200, CH-3960 Sierre, Switzerland. 0041 27 455 90 43 fax: 0041 27 455 91 01. www.bdsierre.ch

June 9-12: Spain

THE 23RD BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL COMIC FESTIVAL. Organisers: Ficomic, Palau, 4 Baixos, 08002 Barcelona, Spain. 0034 93 301 23 69. www.ficomic.com

July 14-17: United States

COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL '05, San Diego, California. Organisers: Comic-Con International, PO Box 128458, San Diego, CA 92112-8458. 001 619 491 2475. www.comic-con.org

August 5-7: United States

WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO CON 2005. Organisers: Wizard World Chicago, 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920-2064. 001 608 226 0200. www.wizarduniverse.com

August 26-28: Canada

CANADIAN NATIONAL COMIC BOOK EXPO 2005, Metro Toronto Convention Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. www.hobbystar.com

September 2-5: United States

DRAGON*CON 2005, Atlanta, Georgia. Organisers: Dragon*Con, PO Box 16459, Atlanta, GA 30321-9998. 001 770 909 0115. www.dragoncon.org

September 17-18: United States

BALTIMORE COMIC-CON, The Baltimore Convention Centre, One West Pratt Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201. 001 410 526 7410. www.comicon.com/baltimore

September 18-19: Finland

THE 19TH HELSINKI COMICS FESTIVAL. Organisers: The Finnish Comics Society, PL 927, 00101 Helsinki, Finland. 00358 50 407 0553. E-mail: tiina-riikka.rauhala@humak.edu

October 7-9: Norway

RAPTUS INTERNATIONAL COMICS FESTIVAL. Organisers: Raptus Bergen Comics Festival, Box 31, 5838 Bergen, Norway. 0047 986 71 710. www.raptus.no

Comics Publishers

North America

Unlike Europe, North American publishers invariably favour indie status to that of being labelled small press. This results in there being hundreds of comics publishers.

While circulations vary immensly, the following are the continent's major comicbook producers with titles printing between 5,000 and 150,000 copies. Contact telephone numbers are given where readily available. Website details can be found on the first page of the directory section.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, PO Box 1674 Station C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2 (Cerebus)

ABSTRACT STUDIOS, PO Box 271487, Houston, TX 77277-1487 (Strangers in Paradise)

AC COMICS, PO Box 521216, Longwood, FL 32752-1216 (adventure titles, Golden Age superhero and western reprints)

ACCLAIM COMICS, 1 Acclaim Plaza, Glen Cove, NY 11542 (game tie-in adventure, Valiant superhero imprint. dormant) (00)1 516 656 5000

AiT/PLANET LAR, 2034 47th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116 (graphic novels) (00)1 415 504 7516

ALTERNATIVE COMICS, 503 North West 37th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32609-2204 (alternative titles and graphic novels) (00)1 352 373 6336

AMERICAN MEDIA CONSUMER ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 600 East Coast Avenue, Lantana, Florida 33464 (Cracked) (00)1 561 586 1111

ANTARCTIC PRESS, 7272 Wurzbach Parkway , Suite 204, San Antonio, Texas TX 78240 (adventure and US manga titles)

ARCHIE COMIC PUBLICATIONS, 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543 (humour titles) (00)1 914 381 5155

AVATAR PRESS, 9 Triumph Drive, Urbana, IL 61802 (horror and fantasy titles) (00)1 217 384 2216

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT, 9744 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 402, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, CA 90212 (adventure titles; dormant)

BONGO ENTERTAINMENT, 1440 South Sepulveda Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (The Simpsons and Futurama and related humour titles) (00)1 310 966 6168

CALIBER COMICS, 225 North Sheldon Road, Plymouth, MI 48170 (black and white adventure titles) (00)1 734 462 0457

CARTOON BOOKS, PO Box 16973, Columbus, OH43216 (Bone and related titles)

CROSSGEN ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400, Oldsmar, FL 34677 (fantasy and adventure titles) (00)1 813 891 1702

CRUSADE FINE ARTS LTD, PO Box 845, Bayport, NY 11705 (fantasy and adventure) (00)1 631 472 2866

DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 South East Main Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222 (adventure, licensed, US and Japanese manga) (00)1 503 652 8815

DC COMICS, 1700 Broadway, NY 10019 (adventure and humour titles, MAD, Vertigo and Paradox Press imprints) (00)1 212 636 5400

DRAWN & QUARTERLY, PO Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, H2V 4SB, Canada (black and white biog)

DREAMWAVE PRODUCTIONS, 11 Allstate Parkway, Suite 200, Markham, Ontario L3R 9T8, Canada (adventure titles)

DYNAMIC FORCES, 155 Ninth Avenue, Suite E, Runnemede, NJ 08078 (variant editions and limited edition merchandise) (00)1 856 312 1040

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 7563 Lake City Way North East, Seattle, Washington 98115 (adventure, biographical and Eros adult titles) (00)1 206 524 1967

HARRIS COMICS, 1115 Broadway, 8th Floor, NY 10010 (Vampirella, fantasy and horror titles) (00)1 212 807 7100

HEAVY METAL, 100 North Village Road, Suite 12, Rockville Center, NY 11570 (adult fantasy magazines and spin-off editions)

HUMANOIDS PUBLISHING, PO Box 931658, Hollywood, California CA 90093 (US-European editions)

IMAGE COMICS, 1071 North Batavia Street, Suite A, Orange, CA 92867 (adventure titles) (00)1 714 2880200

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, 10th Floor, East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016 (adventure, humour and licensed titles) (00)1 212 5764000

NBM PUBLICATIONS, 185 Madison Avenue, Suite 1504, New York, NY 10016 (adult fantasy graphic novels and magazines)

ONI PRESS, 6336 South East Milwaukie Avenue, PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202 (adventure titles)

RADIO COMIX, 11765 West Avenue, PMB #117, San Antonio, TX 78216 (anthropomorphic manga) (00)1 210 3487195

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT, INC, PO Box 834, Stanhope, NJ 07802 (adult titles)

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS PUBLISHING, 577 South Market Street, San Jose, CA 95113 (black and white fantasy titles) (00)1 9718929

TOP SHELF PRODUCTIONS, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282 (alternative and biographical titles) (00)1 770 4276395

TWOMORROWS PUBLISHING, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614 (comics feature and history magazines and books) tel: (00)1 919 449 0344 fax: (00) 1 919 449 0327

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS, PO Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107 (English translated manga titles)

WaRP GRAPHICS, 2600 South Road, Suite 44/242, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (Elfquest and spin-off titles)

United Kingdom

The following are major UK comics and graphic novel publishers. If calling from outside of the UK, you should drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe and Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

AP COMICS, Suite 3, 7 French Row, St Albans, Herts AL3 5DU (adventure titles)

COM.X, The Dickens Inn, Kirk Street, London WC1N 2DG (adventure titles) 020 7831 7777

DC THOMSON, 2 Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals)

DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals) 020 7907 6000

EGMONT MAGAZINES LTD, Fourth Floor, 184-192 Drummond Street, London NW1 3HP (humour, licensed and pre-school titles) 020 7380 6430

HAMLYN BOOKS, 2-4 Heron Quays, London E14 4JB (graphic novels) 020 7531 8400

JOHN BROWN CITRUS PUBLISHING, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR (albums) 020 7565 3000

KNOCKABOUT COMICS, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (humour titles and underground comix and graphic novels) 020 8969 2945

PANINI COMICS (UK), Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5UJ (humour and adventure comics, Marvel licensed titles) 01892 500100

PULP THEATRE ENTERTAINMENT, Mermaid Court, 1 Mermaid House, London Bridge, London SE1 1HR (adventure titles) 020 7403 0378

REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS LTD, The Studio, Brewer Street, Oxford OX1 1QN (Judge Dredd The Megazine and 2000 AD) 01865 792201

THE REDAN COMPANY, Canon Court East, Abbey Lawn, Shrewsbury SY2 5DE (pre-school humour and licenced titles) 01743 364433

SAVOY BOOKS, 446 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3BW (adult comics magazines, books and graphic novels) 0161 445 5771

TITAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP LTD, Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (licensed graphic novels, books, magazines and comics) 020 7620 0200

France

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0033 becomes 011 33

ALBIN MICHEL, 22 rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris (albums) (0033) 1 42 79 10 00

CASTERMAN, 36 rue du Chemin Vert, 75011, Paris (albums and manga titles)

DARGAUD, 15-27 rue Moussorgski, 75018 Paris (albums and manga titles) tel: (0033) 1 53 26 32 32 fax: (0033) 1 53 26 32 00

DELCOURT, 54 rue d'Hauteville, 75010 Paris (albums and comics) tel: (0033) 1 56 03 92 20 fax: (0033) 1 56 03 92 30

FLUIDE GLACIAL, 33 avenue du Main, BP 187, 75755 Paris (comics and albums) (0033) 1 43 20 23 96

GLENAT, 31-33 rue Ernest Renan, 92130 Issy-Les-Moulineaux (albums and manga titles) tel: (0033) 1 41 46 11 41 fax: (0033) 1 41 46 11 13

J'AI LU, 84 rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris (licenced Japanese manga titles) (0033) 1 44 39 34 70

LES HUMANOIDES ASSOCIES, 5 Passage Piver, 75011 Paris (albums) tel: (0033) 1 49 29 88 88 fax: (0033) 1 49 29 88 89

SEMIC FRANCE, 44316 Nantes Cedex 03 (licenced comics and albums) (0033) 2 51 86 14 14

Italy

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0039 becomes 011 39

SERGIO BONELLI EDITORE, via Buonarroti 38, 20145 Milano (black and white comics)

CULT COMICS, viale Emilio Po' 380, 41100 Modena (Image and Dark Horse licensed titles)

MAGIC PRESS, Zona industriale via Ragusa 18, 00040 Pavona, Roma (Vertigo and WildStorm licensed titles) (0039) 06 93020361

STAR COMICS, strada Selvette 1bis/1 Bosco (PG) (comics and black and white manga titles)

ASTORINA S.R.I., via Boccaccio 32, 20123 Milano (Diabolik original and reprint black and white)

KING COMICS, via Pinerolo 3, 00182 Roma (comics)

Spain

The following are the country's comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0034 becomes 011 34

NORMA EDITORAL, Fluvià 89, 08019 Barcelona (licensed DC and Dark Horse comics and albums) 0034 93 303 68 20

EDITORIAL PLANETA-DE AGOSTINI, SA, Aribau 185, 08021 Barcelona (licensed Dark Horse comics and albums)

TOUTAIN EDITOR, SA, Diagonal 325, E-08009 Barcelona (licensed Marvel, Dark Horse, Chaos!, Image and manga comics and albums) 0034 93 344 06 00

EDICIONES LA CÚPULA, Plaza de las Beatas 3, E-08003 Barcelona (adult comics and albums) 0034 32 682 8 05

Mail Order Specialists

Key to abbreviations used:

w/s	= wholesale available	CoBRA	= Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
dis	= bulk discount terms		
cat	= phone/write for catalogue	cc	= major credit cards accepted
s-cat	= sae for catalogue		
wants	= wants lists accepted	sae	= send stamped, addressed envelope with enquiry
s-wants	= sae with wants lists		

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Golden Age

Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945, the first age of superhero comics, but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comics.

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High Street, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Silver Age

Accepted as starting in 1955 with DC's superhero rebirth through ***Detective Comics*** *#225 (introducing the Martian Manhunter) and* ***Showcase*** *#4 (introducing the Barry Allen Flash). Herein covering titles up to late 1960s.*

Colmore Comics & Collectibles, Vienna House, Starley Way, Birmingham B37 7GN (cat, cc, high grade, CGC) 0121 767 1803 fax: 0121 767 1910

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

East Coast Comics UK, 28 Acton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7LG (high grade, s-want, cc, sae) 01502 578385 (day) 560727 (eve)

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High Street, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Quicksilver Comics, PO Box 73, Ossett WF5 0YQ (s-cat, dis, wants, cc, CoBRA) 01924 270500 (fax: 270919)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax 680686)

NEW **Steve Rock Comics**, 4 Orme Drive, Clevedon, Somerset BS21 7HD (Silver-Bronze, cat, wants, sae)

Post-Silver Age

Comics from 1970 to date: from Bronze Age, Marvel Age and Lead Age up to Platinum Age, Gimmick Age, Image Age and beyond. Historians will doubtless eventually decide on a name.

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Tarpaulin Books and Comics, 5 Oak Close, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3EZ (wants, s-cat) 01842 820139

Hot Comics

Current or key titles, first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble.

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN (wants, cc, dis) 020 8686 2400

Advance Imports

US comics are not generally available in UK newsagents, except for some sea-freight shipped low-cover price DCs and Marvels, and can only be found through specialists in the rest of the world. The following companies offer air-shipped copies from all of the major US publishers.

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

NEW **Chapter 12**, 2 Prospect Place, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1LE (wants, s-cat, CoBRA) 01843 860354

86th Floor Comics, 6 Shipley Common Lane, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8TR (dis, cat, cc) 0115 9443009

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR (s-cat cc) 020 7420 3666

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 020 7636 1011

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Red Hot Comics, The Warehouse Block D Unit 8, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH (CoBRA, w/s, dis, wants, cc) tel/fax: 0141 630 0049

Limited Editions

Many high-profile miniseries and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n, cat) 020 8446 3464

Trading Cards

Several mail order dealers carry a range of non-sports cards and related peripherals (files, folders, sleeves).

Beyond Comics, 76 Harlescott Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3BZ (s-cat, s-wants, sae, CoBRA) tel/fax: 020 7564 4213

John McDonald: Non-Sport Trading Cards, 20 Alder Grove, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 3PT (cat, wants) tel/fax: 01236 433358

Old British Titles

The popularity of old British comics continues to increase as more dealers expand into this area. The following specialise in such titles.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

NEW **30th Century Comics**, 18 Lower Richmond Road, Putney, London SW15 1JP (cat, wants, CoBRA, cc) 020 8788 2052

Weird Fantasy, 19 Decoy Road, Ormesby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 3LG (s-cat, s-wants, annuals specialist)

Merchandise

Comics, film and TV-related t-shirts, posters, video games, badges, toys, action figures, etc.

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton, Beds LU1 2TP. (specialists in Star Trek, Star Wars and sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Original Art

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available for collectors.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Peripherals

Acid-free protection for comics. Backing boards, protective bags, storage boxes, etc.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Just Comics, 65 Station Road, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs PE28 2TH (w/s only, CollectorLine™ distributor) 01487 824895 824896

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

General Fantasy

As well as comics old and new, some suppliers also provide catalogues of multi-media fantasy, covering TV, film, trading cards and toys.

Forbidden Planet Mail Order, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (cat) 020 7803 1900 (fax: 7803 1901)

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Manga Titles

English language translations of Japanese comics and US titles drawn in the Japanese style.

United Publications, 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU (ind, back, cat, wants, cc) 020 8325 9507

Alternative & Biographical

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life comicbooks and graphic novels (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar...)

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (wants) 020 7636 1011

Knockabout Comics, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 020 8969 2945 (fax: 8968 7614)

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY 0115 9508045

Comics Auctions

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their valuable comics. The following accept items for sale, as well as providing regular catalogues for mail order bids.

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Distributors

Anybody considering opening a comics shop or becoming a mail order dealer can obtain further information about the supply of titles from the following who bulk air import US and European comics and related items on a weekly basis.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP (graphic novels, art books, comics, remainders, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8768 0022

Diamond Comic Distributors, 2nd Floor, Warton House, 150 High Street, London E15 2NP (US and European comics, cards and related items) 020 8536 5730 (fax: 8536 5736)

Red Route Distribution, Unit 24, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (US & European comics/graphic novels, back-list specialists) 020 8960 5855

Turnaround Publisher Services, Unit 3, Olympia Trading Estate, Coburg Road, Wood Green, London N22 6TZ (graphic novels, art books, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8829 3000

Mail Order Dealers:

CI's Mail Order Index is the industry's most cost-effective and highly-targeted way to reach a huge dedicated audience in excess of 40,000 readers every month. It costs only £4 ($6 US) per entry per issue to appear and is bookable in advance as a six-issue series. Send pre-payment of £24/$36 (plus £4.20 VAT for UK advertisers) per category with your details to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Classified

Advertising terms and conditions

Whether for publication or not, all advertisements must be accompanied by full name, home address and daytime phone number of advertiser.

• All private classified Wants or Announcements ads (comics or card related items only) are free of charge. Maximum 50 words, they will be printed at the publisher's discretion when space permits. *(Only one advertisement can be submitted per letter/per issue so everybody gets a chance to fit in!)*

• FOR SALE ads (and dealer wants/announcements) are charged:
(i) General announcements: Stating no issue numbers, prices or titles. Per 50 words (or part thereof) ..... £5.00 ($7.50 US)
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Full payment, to Comics International, must accompany wordage.

CI Classified, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

For Sale

Comics, TV and film memorabilia and collectables for sale. Large selection of Marvel, DC and indies. Toys, original production animation cels, screen-used props, etc. We are a long-established London mart and NEC Memorabilia trader, now online at www.quitebizarre.co.uk. Not on the Internet? Call 020 8699 2196 with your wants.

Over 20,000 American and British comics for sale from the 1960s to the 1990s. These include miniseries, full runs, tabloids, digests, magazines, **Classics Illustrated** and more. In my collection I also have annuals, videos, trading cards, bubblegum cards, cigarette cards, tea cards and much more. Sorry, but it's just too much to list, so please write with lists to John Clark, 35 Denny Avenue, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1NT, or call me on 01992 716961 or 07941 572672.

For sale: over 1,500 comics! Marvel, DC, Image, indies, limited editions, variants and more. There's something for everyone! From the 1980s to the present. Nearly all 50p each. Contact mochahal@hotmail.com for electronic list or send an sae to Mo Chahal, 34 York Crescent, Darlaston WS10 9JJ.

Comics for sale: hundreds at low prices! Mostly 1990s Marvel, DC and indies and some 1970s Marvel, plus a good selection of 1960s bubblegum cards. For your free catalogue write to Russell Harris, The Spinney, Dalby Road, Partney, Spilsby PE23 4PQ. Tel: 01790 752916

For sale: Punch Magazine 1952 to 1959 yearly bound volumes – £50 per year; Argosy yearly runs 1954 to 1990 – from £20 per year; Locus 1970s to 1990s 54 copies – £55; The Trigan Empire: Don Lawrence hardcover (1978) mint – £60; Dan Dare: Hawke hardcovers volumes 2, 8, 10 and 11 – £60 each all are mint; Batman gum cards: originals from the 1967 Adam West/Burt Ward movie 28 different all mint – £10 each; Creepy (Warren) #1 fine/very fine – £60; The Marvel Collection (over 300 pages of weekly comics) #2 1976 mint – £20; Jonah Hex #1 1977 mint – £80. All prices include postage and packing. Contact John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland 1015 LW.

Wanted

Advertisers are reminded that Wanted ads must be no longer than 50 words (including address), and only single insertion private advertisements can be published free of charge.

Wanted: **Beware the Creeper** 1-6 (DC 1968/9) in good condition or reprint. Also Marvel colour reprints from the 1960s and 1970s (Marvel Tales, etc). Contact Robert Sweeney, 9d Woodside Crescent, Paisley PA1 2ND. Tel: 0141 889 4462. E-mail: rabbiejs2000@yahoo.co.uk.

Wanted: English weekly comics **TV Comic**, **Yogi Bear**, **Huckleberry Hound**, **Beezer** and **Topper** 1960s and 1970s. Gold Key: **Steve Zodiac** and **Fireball XL5**, **Green Acres**, **Bewitched**, **Mr Ed**, **Hogan's Heroes**, **The Munsters**. Car '54: where are you? Any Archie 80-Page Giants. Small-sized pin-up magazines: **66**, **Spick**, **Span**, **Stag**, **Model**, **Oh! My!**, **Carnival**. And anything on Bettie Page. John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland 1015 LW.

Wanted: **The Original Astro Boy** 1-19 (now). 1970s UK weeklies: **Vulcan**, **Valiant** and **Lion** (any condition), **Strangehaven** 1-16, **Marvel's Greatest Comics** 35-96. Will pay cash or trade against items on my latest list. Contact Anthony Pick, 20 Grove Road, Hoylake, Wirral CH47 2DT.

Wanted: Set of **The Hulk Weekly** Marvel UK (with *Black Knight* strip). Will swap or buy. Contact David on 01494 677262.

Wanted: **Battlestar Galactica** (2004) American Magazine Special (DC) Deathstroke The Terminator comics (DC) Teen Titans comics (all volumes). All must be in very fine to near mint condition. Please send details and prices to Neal Clutterbuck, 12 Riddimore Avenue, Redhill, Hereford HR2 7LJ.

Announcements

Fanzine and small press titles must not be offered for sale before being printed. To verify publication, a sample copy must be sent in along with the advertising copy (50 words max). Single bookings only, so everybody gets a chance!

Oh, the horror! MPH Comics' **Tracks** continues with issue #3, modern horror anthology for mature readers. More heroin-addicted, zombie-plagued nightmares in *Cold Turkey!* The evil of computer game obsession and manic depression in *Parallel Tracks!* Taking a 'stab' (groan) at the *Evil Dead* trilogy in *Horror Kid!* Translating horror stories to the comicbook page in *Why Horror?* #2 (plus 30p postage) from Matt Rogerson, MPH Comics, 152 Ashfield Road, Rochdale, Lancashire OL11 1QH. Issues #1 and #2 are still available. Oh, the horror!

The Martian Manhunter! The Blue Beetle! Booster Gold! Guy Gardner! The greatest... well, nearly the greatest... well, OK, but greatest or not, they were the Justice League of the 1980s, and **Comics Retrospective** #14 is dedicated to 'em. #1.40 from Tony Ingram, 3 Lower Harlings, Shotley Gate, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 1QE.

Short Stories, the ultimate stripzine is here! Featuring X-Men, Star Wars, Octobriana and more! With work by Stephen Prestwood, Craig John, Neil Edwards and John Short! Send cheques and postal orders for #2 to J.A. Short, 20 Grants Avenue, Bournemouth NH1 4NR.

Lightning in Paradise. New prose zine featuring Godpack's Blitziana fighting a global crisis. 50 pages. £3.50 including postage from Steve Nottingham, 37 Maxwell Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 1RG.

The Lord of the Rings, a 40-page critical appreciation of Tolkien's masterpiece, written by Mike Cruden, with full-page illustrations by Tony Schofield, £1 (including p&p) from Mike Cruden, 18 Backbower Lane, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 5NS.

Better late than never – issue 12 of **Dogbreath** the **Strontium Dog** fanzine has been unleashed on an unsuspecting world. 40 plus pages of strips, articles and photo romance. Send £2.75 cheque/postal order to Dr Bob/A. Kear, Flat 11, Beaufort Court, 1 Beaufort Street (off Stapleton Road), Easton, Bristol BS5 0SQ.

Parataxis 4: the super-student spectacular moves into its second phase as we meet... The Inspector! Will our heroes end up breaking rocks in a hot sun? Send two first clas stamps to Bionic Comics, 94 Tippett Rise, Reading RG2 0DZ.

The O Men 25: The Eagle Award-nominated super-soap continues! Miss Scarlet reveals some secrets, Rob and Abby get a surprise – and someone dies... Send £1 to Martin, 11a Gatestone Road, Upper Norwood, London SE19 3AT. Collections of early **O Men** issues are also now available! Check out the website: www.theomen.free-online.co.uk.

The Immeasurable Adventures of Gorky Park by Dave Hughes is available now. Mature readers. Send cheque for £3 to David Hughes, Stonechat Productions, PO Box 148, Barrow-in-Furness LA14 3WX.

Sancho 1 from 20,000 Leagues – a darkly comic tale of elderly paranormal adventurers, ex-exorcists, zombies, demons and possessed naked ladies. US size, colour cover, 32 pages of old skool black and white art and Mexican occult thrills! £3 from Alan Nolan, 14 Connawood Green, Bray, Co. Wicklow, Ireland or www.20000-leagues.com.

This is not to be missed! Featuring low-brow art, a prose on fear of flying and comics about regret, selfishness, punishment and salesmen of the old west plus lots more! **Cavity** £2.50 (£2 re-orders) contact dzgreene@hotmail.com if it's not in your local shop.

Original comicbook art. Always wished you could afford the prices? Now you can. Stunning images of your favourite characters or from your own designs. Example art available on request. Call 07833 111549 for details.

Comic Societies

Join The Eagle Society, dedicated to the memory of Britain's National Strip Cartoon Weekly – The Eagle 1950-1969. For just £18 per year (cheques to The Eagle Society) members receive our quarterly journal **Eagle Times**, as well as the chance to attend social gatherings and meet original Eagle contributors. Write to: Keith Howard, 25a Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2UA. E-mail: rsheaf@npg.org.uk

The Comics Creators Guild for industry veterans and aspiring professionals, the largest comics organisation in Europe. Monthly meetings, newsletter, exclusive publications, free legal advice, special discounts and more. For further info contact: Comics Creators Guild, 22 St James Mansions, West End Lane, West Hampstead, London NW6 2AA. www.comicscreators.org.uk

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Comics International's *Classified* section has turned more than one £5 "For Sale" advertiser into a big-time full page dealer.

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Most comic fans have unwanted titles taking up valuable space...

... A loft which is in need of clearing.

... A spare room which is no longer spare.

... A garage which is pining for a car.

Classified can help you not only clear that space, but earn you money while doing so. More than 4,500 such ads have been placed on this page, with regular dealers coming back each issue.

It costs only £5 to place a 50-word For Sale general announcement. Or £10 for a 100-word list ad, detailing issues and prices. Ads can appear within a week of you sending them...

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HOW TO GET THERE. BUS: 68, 91, 168 or 188 to Woburn Place. UNDERGROUND: Piccadilly Line to Russell Square. NATIONAL RAIL: Euston and Kings Cross are within walking distance of the venue.

FUTURE DATES: 3RD APRIL, 15TH MAY, 19TH JUNE 2005

Dealers: for table availability phone 020 7476 6873

www.comicmart.co.uk

Events

A summary of all the events advertised this issue

February

12/2-10/4 Hove: Leo Baxendale exhibition, Hove Museum & Art Gallery ..... (p12)

19/2 Nottingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p56)

20/2 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)

26/2 Bedford: Simon Bisley, Liam Sharp, Glenn Fabry, Dez Skinn and Kev Walker signing at Close Encounters ..... (p13)

March

12/3 Manchester: Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p56)

13/3 Liverpool: Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p56)

19/3 Sheffield: Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) ..... (p56)

April

2/4 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p56)

3/4 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)

9/4 Newcastle: Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p56)

16/4 Nottingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p56)

23/4 Birmingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Aston University, Students' Guild Hall, Aston Triangle ..... (p56)

30/4 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p56)

May

7/5 Manchester: Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p56)

8/5 Liverpool: Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p56)

13/5 Bristol: ProCon 2, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol ..... (p67)

13-15/5 Bristol: Comic Expo, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol ..... (p67)

14/5 Glasgow: Glasgow Comic & Toy Fair, Henry Wood Hall, Claremont Street, Glasgow ..... (p42)

15/5 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)

28/5 Newcastle: Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p56)

29/5 London: The London ABC Show, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, Russell Square ..... (p47)

June

11/6 Nottingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p56)

18/6 Sheffield: Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) ..... (p56)

19/6 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)

25/6 Manchester: Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p56)

26/6 Liverpool: Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p56)

Joe CASEY
Henry FLINT
Doug BRAITHWAITE
Rodney RAMOS
and Ian CHURCHILL

Austin JANOWSKY
JOCK
David HINE
Al DAVISON

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Mike PLOOG
Michael Avon OEMING
David MACK
Dave GIBBONS
Simon BISLEY
Gary FRANK
Liam SHARP
Bryan TALBOT
Mike CAREY

ProCon 2 *Free for all pro and semi-pro creators*
Featuring one-to-one pro interviews with Straczynski, Oeming & Mack
FRIDAY 13/5: From 2pm until very, very late

COMIC EXPO
SAT 14/5: 12 Noon - 6:00pm
SUN 15/5: 11:00am - 5:00pm

Info: 0117 924 4655
For full creator/events listings and updates, log on to www.comicexpo.net

Previously announced guest Herb Trimpe regrets that, due to a combination of work and personal matters, he is unable to attend Comic Expo.

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